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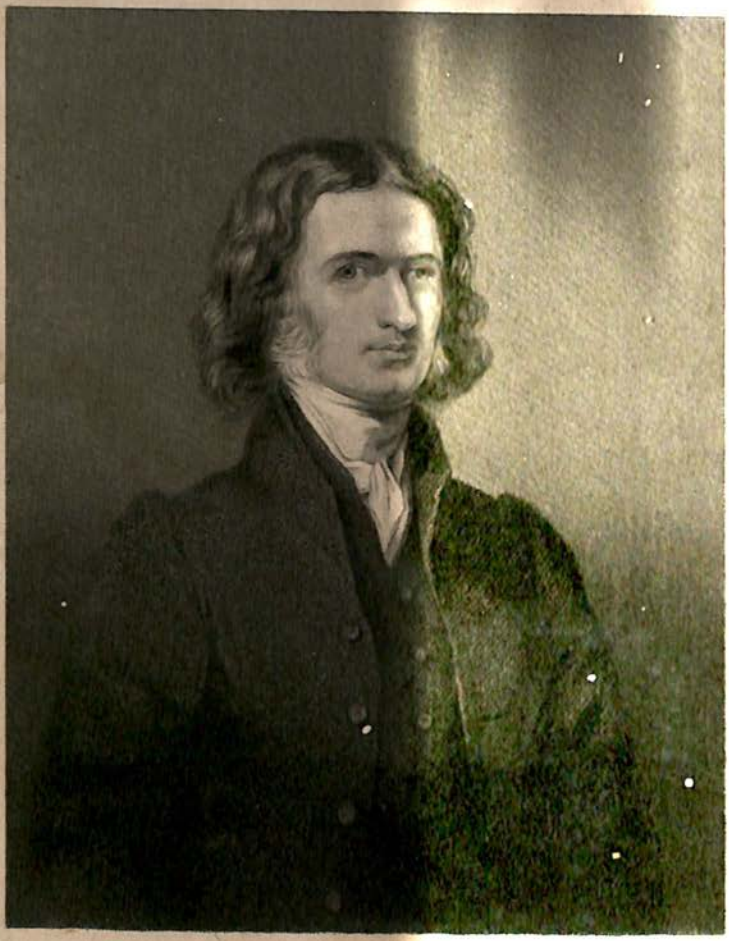

Your affectionate friend

Edw Irving

London, Hurst & Bl

THE LIFE

OF

EDWARD IRVING,

MINISTER OF

THE NATIONAL SCOTCH CHURCH, LONDON.

Illustrated by his Journals and Correspondence.

BY

MRS. OLIPHANT.

"Whether I live, I live unto the Lord; and whether I die, I die unto the Lord: living or dying, I am the Lord's." Amen.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO ALL WHO LOVE THE MEMORY OF

EDWARD IRVING:

WHICH THE WRITER HAS FOUND BY MUCH EXPERIMENT

TO MEAN ALL WHO EVER KNEW HIM:

THIS BOOK IS INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

It seems necessary to say something, by way of excusing myself for what I feel must appear to many the presumption of undertaking so serious a work as this biography. I need not relate the various unthought-of ways by which I have been led to undertake it, which are my apology to myself rather than to the public; but I may say that, in a matter so complicated and delicate, it appeared to me a kind of safeguard that the writer of Edward Irving's life should be a person without authority to pronounce judgment on one side or the other, and interested chiefly with the man himself, and his noble courageous warfare through a career encompassed with all human agonies. I hoped to get personal consolation amid heavy troubles out of a life so full of great love, faith, and sorrow; and I have found this life so much more lofty, pure, and true than my imagination, that the picture, unfolding under my hands, has often made me pause to think how such a painter as the Blessed Angelico took the attitude of devotion at his labour, and painted such saints on his knees. The large extracts which, by the kindness of his surviving children, I have been permitted to make from Irving's letters,

will show the readers of this book, better than any description, what manner of man he was; and I feel assured that to be able thus to illustrate the facts of his history by his own exposition of its heart and purpose, is to do him greater justice than could be hoped for from any other means of interpretation.

My thanks are due, first and above all, to Professor Martin Irving, of Melbourne, and to his sister, Mrs. Gardiner, London, who have kindly permitted me the use of their father's letters; to the Rev. James Brodie and Mrs. Brodie, of Monimail, and Miss Martin, Edinburgh; to J. Fergusson, Esq., and W. Dickson, Esq., Glasgow, nephews of Irving; the Rev. Dr. Grierson, of Errol; Patrick Sheriff, Esq., of Haddington; Mrs. Carlyle, Chelsea; the Rev. Dr. Hanna; M. N. Macdonald Hume, Esq.; James Bridges, Esq.; Rev. D. Ker, Edinburgh; Rev. J. M. Campbell, late of Row; J. Hatley Frere, Esq., London; Rev. A. J. Scott, of Manchester; Dr. G. M. Scott, Hampstead; Rev. R. H. Story, of Rosneath; and other friends of Irving, some of them now beyond the reach of earthly thanks—among whom I may mention the late Henry Drummond, Esq., of Albury, and Mrs. Wm. Hamilton — who have kindly p[illegible]d letters and other memoranda at my disposal, or given me the benefit of their personal recollections.

M. O. W. OLIPHANT.

EALING: *April* 1862.

CONTENTS OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

CHAPTER I.

HIS PARENTAGE AND CHILDHOOD.

The Irvings and Lowthers — Peculiarities of the Race — His immediate Family — Life in Annan — Universal Friendliness — Traditions of the District — The Covenanters — Birth of Edward — His Parents — Peggy Paine's School — Hannah Douglas — Annan Academy — Out-door Education — Solway Sands — Escaping from the Tide — Early Characteristics — Sunday Pilgrimages — The "Whigs" — Ecclefechan — His youthful Companions — Strange Dispersion — Home Influences — Leaving Annan . . . . . Page 1

CHAPTER II.

HIS COLLEGE LIFE.

Prolonged Probation of Scotch Ministers — Boy-Students — Independence — Hard Training — Journeys on Foot — Early Reading — Distinctions in Society — Patrons and Associates — Carlyle's Description of Irving — Early Labours . . . . . .

CHAPTER III.

HADDINGTON.

The Doctor's little Daughter — The first Declension — Conflict between Pity and Truth — New Friends — Sport and Study — Holiday Science — Incident in St. George's Church — Society in Haddington — Bolton Manse — Young Companions — Extent of his Work — Courage and Cheerfulness — Leaves Haddington 36

CHAPTER IV.

KIRKCALDY.

Kirkcaldy Academy — Personal Appearance — Severe Discipline — Doing all Things heartily — Kirkcaldy Sands — Milton Class — Schoolboy Chivalry — "Much respected Pupils" — Love-making — Confidential Disclosures — Engagement — The Minister of Kirkcaldy — The Manse Household — Sister Elizabeth — Her Husband — Irving's First Sermon — Superiority to "The Paper" — "Ower muckle Gran'ner" — Other people's Sermons — His Thoughts about Preaching — In a Highland Inn — Warlike Aspiration — General Assembly — Debate on Pluralities — Intolerance of Circumstances — Abbotshall School-house . Page 50

CHAPTER V.

AFLOAT ON THE WORLD.

Bristo Street — Renewed Studies — Advice — Literary Societies — Begins anew — Was his own Hearer — Undisturbed Belief — His Haddington Pupil — Candour and Pugnacity — Clouded Prospects — The Apostolic Missionary — Domestic Letters — Carlyle — Hopes and Fears — Preaches in St. George's, Edinburgh — Suspense — Goes to Ireland — Wanderings — Invitation to Glasgow — Interest in Church Affairs — Doubtful of his own Success 77

CHAPTER VI.

GLASGOW.

Dr. Chalmers's Helper — Condition of Glasgow — Irving's political Sentiments — State of the Country in general — Irving's Confidence in the Radicals — The Calton Weavers — Chalmers and Irving — Incessant Labours — The Parish of St. John — Its Autocrat — The Shoemaker — "He kens about Leather" — Apostolic Benediction — Intercourse with the Poor — A Legacy — The Help of a Brother — "It's no himsel" — Two Presbyters — The Pedlar — "A man on Horse" — The Howies — Holiday Adventures — Simplicity of Heart — Solemnity of Deportment — Convicts in Glasgow Jail — Irving patronised by the Office-bearers — In the Shade — His Loyalty and Admiration — The bright Side — The dark Side — Missionary Projects renewed — The Caledonian Chapel, Hatton Garden — Letter of Recommendation — Favourable Prognostications — Irving desires to go to London — His Pleasure in his Re-

ception there — Obstacles — The Caledonian Asylum — Pledges himself to learn Gaelic — Bond required by the Presbytery — Visits to Paisley — Removal of Obstacles — Rosneath — Happy Anticipations — Farewell Sermon — Offers his Services in London to all — Receives a farewell Present — The Annandale Watchmaker — A "singular Honour" — Goes to London . Page 99

CHAPTER VII.

LONDON, 1822.

First Appearance — Satisfaction with his new Sphere — His Thoughts and Hopes — Outset in Life — Chalmers in London — Appeals to Irving's Sympathy — Progress in Popularity — "Our Scottish Youth" — Canning and Mackintosh — Happy Obscurity — The "Happy Warrior" — The Desire of his Heart — His first Household 150

CHAPTER VIII.

1823.

The Orations — Irving's much Experience in Preaching — Addresses himself to educated Men — Argument for Judgment to come — Assailed by Critics — Mock Trial — Indictment before the Court of Common Sense — Acquittal — Description of the Church and Preacher — Influence of his personal Appearance — Inconveniences of Popularity — Success of the Book — A rural Sunday — His Marriage — His Wife — The bridal Holiday — Reappearance in St. John's — Return to London — Preface to the Third Edition of the Orations — His Dedications and Prefaces generally — Mr. Basil Montagu — Irving's grateful Acknowledgments — His early Dangers in Society — Bedford Square — Coleridge — His Influence on the Views of Irving — Social Charities — A simple Presbyter 164

CHAPTER IX.

1824.

Failure of Health — Determination to do his Work thoroughly — Proposes to write a Missionary Sermon — For Missionaries after the Apostolical School — The wandering Apostle — Consternation of the Audience — Wrath of the religious World — A Martyr-Missionary — Publication of the Oration — An Exeter Hall Meeting — Protest against the Machinery of Evangelism — Dedication to Coleridge — Lavish Acknowledgments —

Coldness and Estrangement — The Presbyterian Eldership — Its Duties and Privileges — Irving forms his Kirk-session — Birth of little Edward — Personal Charities — A lost Life — Hospitality — Commencement of the new Church — Evangelical Journey — Birmingham — Home Society — "In God he lived and moved" . . . . . Page 193

CHAPTER X.

1825.

Irving's Introduction to the Study of Prophecy — The Fascination of that Study — His Conscientiousness in treating his Subjects — Habits of Thought — Sermon to the Continental Society — Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed — Sermons on public Occasions — Hibernian Bible Society — An Afternoon among the Poor — Irving's "Way" — Invitation to remove to Edinburgh — His Answer — His Manner of Life — The Paddington Coach — His Letter of Welcome to his Wife — His Feelings in respect to his Call to Edinburgh — Reasons for remaining in London — Sermons on the Trinity — Opinions in respect to Miracles — Sacrament of Baptism — Original Standards — Baptismal Regeneration — Little Edward's Illness and Death — Sorrow and Consolation — Irving's Announcement of his Child's Death — Little Edward's Memory — "A glorious Bud of Being" — Irving visits the sorrowful in Kirkcaldy 220

CHAPTER XI.

JOURNAL.

Wanderings among the Hills — An Apostolical Journey — Annan — Incidents of a Stage-coach Journey — Arrival at Home — Commencement of Journal-letters — Morning Worship — Historical Reading — Bishop Overall's Convocation Book — "Idolatry of the Memory" — Devotion and Study — Visions of the Night — Breakfast Party — A Day in the City — Book-stalls — Christian Counsel — In Faintness and Fervour — "For the Consolation of Edward's Mother" — The Secret of Fellowship — Influence of the Landscape — Wisdom and Power — Prayers for the Absent — Interceding for the people — A Sunday's Services — Exposition — Sermon — Evening Service — His Responsibility as Head of the Household — At Home — Scottish Adventurers — The Priest and his Catechumens — Two Sisters — A Companion for his Isabella — A Son from the Lord — Weariness — A Spirit full of Inspirations — Returns to the Convocation Book — Study — A Re-

union of Young Christians — Self-denial in Religious Conversation — "A very rich Harvest" — Temptations of Satan — Pastoral Visits — A Sick-Bed — Correggio's "St. John" — Prayers — Ecclesiasticus — Deteriorating Effect of a Great City — Two London Boys — A logical Companion — Sunday Services — Want of Faith — Little Edward's Ministry — An Intellectualist — Influence of Custom — Remonstrance about Length of Services — The Peace-Offering — Philanthropy — The Mystery of the Trinity — Missionaries — Readings in Hebrew — Letters of Introduction — The Church as a House — Simple and unprovided Faith — Funeral Services — The Twelfth Day of the Month — Sunday Morning — Presentiments — True Brotherhood — The prodigal Widow — Undirected Letters — A London Sponging-house — Joseph in Prison — From House to House — Christian Intercourse — Domestic Worship — A Death-bed — A Good Voyage — The Theology of Medicine — The Glory of God — Huskiness about the Heart — The Spirit of a Man — Different Forms of the worldly Spirit — Try the Spirits — A Benediction to the Absent — Visions of the Night — Sunday — The Ministry of Women — Morning Visitors — A Dream — Sceptics — The Four Spirits — Religious Belles — Best Manner of contending with Infidelity — A subtle Cantab — A Circle of Kinsfolk — Pleasures of the Table: Pea-soup and Potatoes — The Spirit of a former Age — The lost Sheep — The Influence of the Holy Spirit — New Testament History of the Church — The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men — Wisdom — Farewell Counsels — A Funeral — The Joy of Grief — Management — Deterioration — The New Church — Ministerial Liberty — Dreams of Edward — The Spirit of Prayer — "My Dumfriesshire" — Paralytic in Soul — Under-current of Thought during Prayer — Money, the universal Falsehood — Lessons in Spanish — The Wings of Love — Parables — Tokens of God's Blessing — Irving's Anxiety about his Wife's Journey — A young Visitor — A "Benedict" — Evils of Formality — Benediction — Irving's only Journal Page 249

CHAPTER XII.

1826 — 1827.

The Headship of Christ — A Baptized Christendom — Expansion — Ben-Ezra — The Spanish Jesuit — Irving's Consistency — A Christian Nation — Political Opinions — Rest and Relaxation — Beckenham — His "Helper meet for him" — The Hibernian Bible Society — Albury — Henry Drummond — Conference for the Study of Prophecy — Concerning the Second Advent — A

School of Prophets — Irving's Verses — The Antichrist — A Herald of the Lord's Coming — Signs of the Times — The Fife Bank — Help and Consolation — Opening of National Scotch Church — Unanimity of the Congregation — Dr. Chalmers's Diary — Irving keeps Chalmers waiting — Dr. Chalmers shakes his Head — Important Crisis — Fashion went her idle Way — Irving's own Evidence on the Subject — Reality — Cessation of the Crowd — "The Plate" — Irving's Offering — The Bible Society — A May Meeting — A Moment of Depression — Projects for the Future — Lectures on Baptism — Seed-time — Ordination Charge — Vaughan of Leicester — The Light that never was on Sea or Shore. . . . . Page 376

EDWARD IRVING.

CHAPTER I.

HIS PARENTAGE AND CHILDHOOD.

In the autumn of the eventful year 1792, at the most singular crisis of the world's history which has arisen in modern times,—when France was going mad in her revolution, and the other nations of Christendom were crowding in, curious and dismayed, to see that spectacle which was to result in so many other changes; but far away from all those outcries and struggles, in the peaceful little Scotch town of Annan, Edward Irving, the story of whose life is to be told in the following pages, was born. He was the son of Gavin Irving, of a long-established local kindred, well known, but undistinguished, who followed the humble occupation of a tanner in Annan,—and of Mary Lowther, the handsome and high-spirited daughter of a small landed proprietor in the adjacent parish of Dornoch. Among the Irving forefathers were a family of Howys, Albigenses, or at least French Protestant refugees, one of whom had become parish minister in Annan, and has left behind him some recollections of lively wit worthy his race, and a tombstone, with a quaint in-

scription, which is one of the wonders of the melancholy and crowded churchyard, or rather burying-ground; for the present church of the town has left the graves behind. The same dismal enclosure, with its nameless mounds, rising mysterious through the rugged grass, proclaims the name of Irving on every side in many lines of kindred; but these tombstones seem almost the only record extant of the family. The Lowthers were more notable people. The eldest brother, Tristram, whom Edward characterises as "Uncle Tristram of Dornoch, the wilful," seems to have been one of the acknowledged characters of that characteristic country. He lived and died a bachelor, saving, litigious and eccentric; and, determined to enjoy in his lifetime that fame which is posthumous to most men, he erected his own tombstone in Dornoch churchyard, recording on it the most memorable of his achievements. The greatest of these were, winning a lawsuit in which he had been engaged against his brothers, and building a bridge. It appears that he showed true wisdom in getting what satisfaction he could out of this autobiographical essay while he lived; for his respectable heirs have balked Tristram, and carried away the characteristic monument. Another brother lives in local tradition as the good-natured giant of the district. It is told of him that, having once accompanied his droves into England (they were all grazier farmers by profession), the Scottish Hercules, placid of temper, and perhaps a little slow of apprehension, according to the nature of giants, was refreshing himself in an old-fashioned tavern—locality uncertain—supposed to be either the dock precincts of Liverpool, or the eastern

wastes of London. The other guests in the great sanded kitchen, where they were all assembled, amused themselves with an attempt to "chaff" and aggravate the stranger; and finding this tedious work, one rash joker went so far as to insult him, and invite a quarrel. George Lowther bore it long, probably slow to comprehend the idea of quarrelling with such antagonists; at last, when his patience was exhausted, the giant, grimly humorous, if not angry, seized, some say a great iron spit from the wall, some a poker from the hearth, and twisting it round the neck of his unfortunate assailant, quietly left him to the laughter and condolences of his comrades till a blacksmith could be brought to release him from that impromptu pillory. Gavin Irving's wife was of this stout and primitive race. Her activity and cheerful, high-spirited comeliness are still well remembered by the contemporaries of her children; and even the splendour of the scarlet riding-skirt and Leghorn hat, in which she came home as a bride, are still reflected in some old memories.

The families on both sides were of competent substance and reputation, and rich in individual character. No wealth, to speak of, existed among them: a little patriarchal foundation of land and cattle, from which the eldest son might perhaps claim a territorial designation if his droves found prosperous market across the border; the younger sons, trained to independent trades, one of them, perhaps, not disdaining to throw his plaid over his shoulder and call his dog to his heels behind one of these same droves, a sturdy novitiate to his grazier life; while the inclinations of another might quite as naturally and suitably lead him to such

study of law as may be necessary for a Scotch "writer," or to the favourite and most profoundly respected of all professions, "the ministry," as it is called in Scotland. The Irving and Lowther families embraced both classes, with all the intermediary steps between them; and Gavin Irving and his wife, in their little house at Annan, stood perhaps about midway between the homely refinement of the Dumfriesshire manses and the rude profusion of the Annandale farms.

Of this marriage eight children were born,—three sons, John, Edward, and George, all of whom were educated to learned professions; and five daughters, all respectably married, one of whom still survives, the last of her family. All the sisters seem to have left representatives behind them; but John and George both died unmarried before the death of their distinguished brother. The eldest, whom old friends speak of as "one of the handsomest young men of his day," and whom his father imagined the genius of the family, died obscurely in India on Edward's birthday, the 4th of August, in the prime of his manhood, a medical officer in the East India Company's service. He was struck down by jungle fever, a sharp and sudden blow, and his friends had not even the satisfaction of knowing fully the circumstances of his death. But henceforward the day, made thus doubly memorable, was consecrated by Edward as a solemn fast-day, and spent in the deepest seclusion. Under the date of a letter, written on the 2nd of August some years after, he writes the following touching note:—"4 *August, Dies natalis atque fatalis incidit*," translated underneath by himself "The day of birth and of death draweth nigh."

—the highest art could not have reared such a monument to the early dead.

The stormy firmament under which these children were born, and all the commotions going on in the outside world, scarcely seem to have fluttered the still atmosphere of the little rural town in which they first saw the light. There the quiet years were revolving, untroubled by either change or tumult: quiet traffic, slow, safe, and unpretending, sailed its corn-laden sloops from the Waterfoot, the little port where Annan water flows into the Solway; and sent its droves across the border, and grew soberly rich without alteration of either position or manners. The society of the place was composed of people much too well known in all the details and antecedents of their life to entertain for a moment the idea of forsaking their humble natural sphere. The Kirk lay dormant, by times respectable and decorous, by times, unfortunately, much the reverse, but very seldom reaching a higher point than that of respectability. Politics did not exist as an object of popular interest. The "Magistrates" of Annan elected their sixth part of a member of Parliament dutifully as his Grace's agents suggested, and gleaned poor posts in the Customs and Excise for their dependent relations. The parish school, perhaps of a deeper efficiency than anything else in the place, trained boys and girls together into stout practical knowledge, and such rude classic learning as has established itself throughout Scotland. High Puritanism, such as is supposed to form the distinguishing feature of Scotch communities, was undreamed of in this little town. According to its fashion Annan was warmly hospitable and festive, living in a little round

of social gaieties. These gaieties were for the most part tea parties, of a description not now known, unless, perhaps, they may still linger in Annan and its companion-towns,—parties in which tea was a meal of much serious importance, accompanied by refreshments of a more substantial kind, and followed by a sober degree of joviality. The families who thus amused themselves grew up in the closest relations of neighbourship; they sent off sons into the world to gain name and fame beyond the highest dreams of the countryside, yet to be fondly claimed on coming back with an old affection closer than fame, as still the well-known John or Edward of all their contemporaries in Annan. Nothing could contrast more strangely with the idea which, looking back, we instinctively form of the state of matters at that stirring epoch, than this little neutral-coloured community, dimly penetrated by its weekly newspaper, living a long way off from all startling events, and only waking into knowledge of the great commotions going on around, when other occurrences had obliterated them, and their interest was exhausted. Nor was there any intellectual or spiritual movement among themselves to make up. The Kirk, the great mainspring of Scottish local life, was dormant, as we have said,—as indeed the Church was at this era in most places throughout the world. The Annan clergyman was one whom old parishioners still can scarcely bear to blame, but who in his best days could only be spoken of with affectionate pity; a man whose habitual respect for his own position made him "always himself" in the pulpit—a quaint and melancholy distinction—and who never would tolerate the sound of

an oath even when constantly frequenting places where oaths were very usual embellishments of conversation. Religion had little active existence in the place, as may be supposed; but the decorum which preserved the minister's Sundays in unimpeachable sobriety kept up throughout the community a certain religious habit, the legacy of a purer generation. Household psalms still echoed of nights through the closed windows, and children, brought up among few other signs of piety, were yet trained in the habit of family prayers. This was almost all the religion which existed in Puritan Scotland in these eventful French Revolution days; and even this was owing more to the special traditions of the soil in such a region as Annandale, than to any deeper impulse of faith.

For outside this comfortable prosaic world was a world of imagination and poetry, never to be dissevered from that border country. Strange difference of a few centuries! The Annandale droves went peaceably to the southern market past many a naked peel-house and austere tower of defence on both sides of the border; but the country, watched and guarded by these old apparitions, had not forgotten the moss-troopers: and far more clearly and strongly, with vision scarcely sufficiently removed from the period even to be impartial, the district which held the Stones of Irongray, and enclosed many a Covenanter's grave, remembered that desperate fever and frenzy of persecution through which the Kirk had once fought her way. I recollect, at a distance of a great many years, the energy with which a woman-servant from that countryside told tales of the "Lag," who is the Claverhouse of the

border, till the imagination of a nursery, far removed from the spot, fixed upon him, in defiance of all nearer claims, as the favourite horror,—the weird, accursed spirit, whom young imaginations, primitive and unsentimental, have no compunctions about delivering over to Satan. This old world of adventurous romance and martyr legend thrilled and palpitated around the villages of Annandale. The educated people in the town, the writer or the doctor, or possibly the minister, all the men who were wiser than their neighbours, might perhaps entertain enlightened views touching those Covenanter fanatics whom enlightened persons are not supposed to entertain much sympathy with; but in the tales of the ingleside—in the narratives heard by the red glow of the great kitchen fire, or in the farm-house chimney corner—enlightened views were out of court, and the home-spun martyrs of the soil were absolute masters of all hearts and suffrages. And perhaps few people out of the reach of such an influence, can comprehend the effect which is produced upon the ardent, young, inexperienced imagination by those familiar tales of torture endured, and death accomplished, by men bearing the very names of the listeners, and whose agony and triumph have occurred in places of which every nook and corner is familiar to their eyes; the impression made is such as nothing after can ever efface or obliterate; and it has the effect—an effect I confess not very easily explainable to those who have not experienced it—of weaving round the bald services of the Scotch Church a charm of imagination more entrancing and visionary than the highest poetic ritual could command, and of connecting her absolute

canons and unpicturesque economy with the highest epic and romance of national faith. Perhaps this warm recollection of her martyrs, and of that fervent devotion which alone can make martyrs possible, has done more to neutralise the hard common sense of the country, and to preserve the Scotch Church from over-legislating herself into decrepitude, than any other influence. We too, like every other Church and race, have our legends of the Saints, and make such use of them in the depths of our reserve and national reticence as few strangers guess or could conceive.

It was in this community that Edward Irving received his first impressions. He was born on the 4th of August, 1792, in a little house near the old town-cross of Annan. There he was laid in his wooden cradle, to watch with unconscious eyes the light coming in at the low, long window of his mother's narrow bedchamber; or rather, according to the ingenious hypothesis of a medical friend of his own, to lie exercising one eye upon that light, and intensifying into that one eye, by way of emphatic unconscious prophecy of the future habit of his soul, all his baby power of vision—a power which the other eye, hopelessly obscured by the wooden side of the cradle, was then unable to use, and never after regained; an explanation of the vulgar obliquity called a squint, which I venture to recommend to all unprejudiced readers. The stairs which led to Mrs. Irving's bedchamber ascended through the kitchen, a cheerful, well-sized apartment as such houses go; and in the other end of the house, next to the kitchen, was the parlour, a small, inconceivably small room, in which to rear a family of eight stalwart sons and

daughters, and to exercise all the hospitalities required by that sociable little community. But society in Annan was evidently as indifferent to a mere matter of space as society in a more advanced development. The tanner's yard was opposite the house, across the little street. There he lived in the full exercise of his unsavoury occupation, with his children growing up round him; a quiet man, chiefly visible as upholding the somewhat severe discipline of the schoolmaster against the less austere virtue of the mother, who, handsome and energetic, was the ruling spirit of the house. It is from Mrs. Irving that her family seem to have taken that somewhat solemn and dark type of beauty which, marred only by the intervention of the wooden cradle, became famous in the person of her illustrious son. I do not say that she realised the ordinary popular notion about the mothers of great men; but it is apparent that she was great in all that sweet personal health, force and energy which distinguished her generation of Scottish women; and which, perhaps, with the shrewdness and characteristic individuality which accompany it, is of more importance to the race and nation than any degree of mere intellect. "Evangelicalism," said Edward Irving, long after, "has spoiled both the minds and bodies of the women of Scotland—there are no women now like my mother." The devoutest evangelical believer might forgive the son for that fond and filial saying. It is clear that no conventional manner of speech, thought, or barrier of ecclesiastical proprieties unknown to nature, had limited the mother of those eight Irvings, whom she brought up accordingly in all the freedom of a life almost rural, yet amid all the

warm and kindly influences of a community of friends. To be born in such a place and such a house, was to come into the world entitled to the familiar knowledge and affection of "all the town"—a fact which may be quaintly apprehended in the present Annan, by the number of nameless quiet old people, who, half admiring and half incredulous of the fame of their old schoolfellow, brighten up into vague talk of "Edward" when a stranger names his name.

The first appearance which Edward Irving made out of this house with its wooden cradle, was at a little school, preparatory to more serious education, kept by "Peggy Paine," a relation of the unfortunate tailor-sceptic, who in those days was in uneasy quarters in Paris, in the midst of the revolution. An old woman, now settled for her old age in her native town, who had in after years encountered her great townsman in London, and remaining loyally faithful to his teaching all her life, is now, I suppose, the sole representative in Annan of the religious body commonly called by his name, remembers in those old vernal days how Edward helped her to learn her letters, and how they two stammered into their first syllables over the same book in Peggy Paine's little school. This was the beginning of a long friendship, as singular as it is touching, and which may here be followed through its simple course. When Edward, long after, was the most celebrated preacher of his day, and Hannah, the Annan girl whom he had helped to learn her letters, was also in London, a servant struggling in her own sphere through the troubles of that stormier world, her old schoolfellow stretched out his cordial hand to her, without a moment's

shrinking from the work in which her hand was engaged. It was natural that all the world about her should soon know of that friendship. And Hannah's "family" were ambitious, like everybody else, of the acquaintance of the hero of the day. He was too much sought to be easily accessible, till the master and mistress bethought themselves of the intercession of their maid, and sent her with their invitation to back it by her prayers. The result was a triumph for Hannah. Irving gratified the good people by going to dine with them for his schoolfellow's sake. I am not aware that anything romantic or remarkable came of the introduction so accomplished, as perhaps ought to have happened to make the incident poetically complete; but I cannot help regarding it as one of the pleasantest of anecdotes. Hannah lives at Annan, an old woman, pensioned by the grateful representative of the family whom she had faithfully served, and tells with tears this story of her friend; and stands a homely, solitary pillar, the representative of the "Catholic Apostolic Church" in the place which gave its most distinguished member birth.

The next stage of Edward's education was greatly in advance of Peggy Paine. Schoolmasters must have been either a more remarkable race of men in those days, or the smaller number of them must have enhanced their claim upon popular appreciation. At least it was no uncommon matter for the parishes and little towns of Scotland to fix with pride upon their schoolmaster as the greatest boast of their district. Such was the case with Mr. Adam Hope, who taught the young Irvings, and after them a certain Thomas Carlyle from Ecclefechan, with other not undistinguished men.

There were peculiarities in that system of education. People below the rank of gentry did not think of sending their daughters to what were called boarding-schools; or at least were subject to much derisive remark if they ventured on such an open evidence of ambition. The female schools in existence were distinctively *sewing* schools, and did not pretend to do much for the intellect; so that boys and girls trooped in together, alike to the parish-school and the superior Academy, sat together on the same forms, stood together in the same classes, and not unfrequently entered into tough combats for prizes and distinctions, whimsical enough to hear of now-a-days. Of this description was the Annan Academy, at which Edward does not appear to have taken any remarkable position. He does not seem even to have attained the distinction of one of those dunces of genius who are not unknown to literature. Under the severe discipline of those days, he sometimes came home from school with his ears "pinched until they bled," to his mother's natural resentment; but found no solace to his wounded feelings or members from his father, who sided with the master, and does not seem to have feared the effect of such trifles upon the sturdy boys who were all destined to fight their way upward by the brain rather than the hands. The only real glimpse which is to be obtained of Edward in his school days discloses the mournful picture of a boy "kept in," and comforted in the ignominious solitude of the school-room by having his "piece" hoisted up to him by a cord through a broken window. However, he showed some liking for one branch of education, that of mathematics, in which he afterwards dis-

tinguished himself. It was the practice in Annan to devote one day of the week specially to mathematical lessons, an exceptional day, which the boys hailed as a kind of holiday.

The little town, however, was not destitute of classical ambition. Tradition tells of a certain blind John who had picked up a knowledge of Latin in the parish school, chiefly from hearing the lessons of other boys there; and had struggled somehow to such a height of latinity that his teaching and his pupils were renowned as far as Edinburgh, where awful professors did not scorn to acknowledge his attainments. It is probable that Edward did not study under this unauthorised instructor; and the orthodox prelections of the Academy did not develop the literary inclinations of the athletic boy, who found more engrossing interests in every glen and hillside. For nothing was wanting to the perfection of his education out of doors. There were hills to climb, a river close at hand, a hospitable and friendly country to be explored; and the miniature port at the Waterfoot, where impetuous Solway bathed with tawny salt waves the little pier, and boats that tempted forth the adventurous boyhood of Annan. Early in Edward's life he became distinguished for feats of swimming, walking, rowing, climbing, all sorts of open-air exercises. The main current of his energy flowed out in this direction, and not in that of books. His scattered kindred gave full occasion for long walks and such local knowledge as adventurous schoolboys delight in; and when he and his companions went to Dornoch, to his mother's early home, where his uncles still lived, it was Edward's amusement, says a surviving relative,

to leap all the gates in the way. This fact survives all the speculations that may have been in the boy's brain on that rural, thoughtful road. His thoughts, if he had any, dispersed into the listening air and left no sign; but there can be no mistake about the leaping of the gates.

In this early period of his life he is said to have met with an adventure, sufficiently picturesque and important to be recorded. Every one who knows the Solway is aware of the peculiarities of that singular estuary. When the tide is full, a nobler firth is not to be seen than this brimming flood of green sea-water, with Skiddaw glooming on the other side over the softer slopes of Cumberland, and Criffel standing sentinel on this, upon the Scotch sea-border; but when the tide is out, woeful and lamentable is the change. Solway, shrunk to a tithe of its size, meanders, gleaming through vast banks of sand, leaving here and there a little desert standing bare in the very midst of its channel, covered with stake-nets which raise their heads in the strangest, unexpected way, upon a spot where vessels of considerable burden might have passed not many hours before. The firth, indeed, is so reduced in size by the ebbing of the tide, that it is possible to ride, or even to drive a cart across from one side to the other; a feat, indeed, which is daily accomplished, and which might furnish a little variation upon the ancient romantic routine of Gretna Green, as the ferryman at the Brough was in former times equally qualified with the blacksmith at the border toll, and not without much patronage, though his clients were humbler fugitives. When, however, Solway sets about his daily and nightly reflow, he does it with a rush and impetuosity worthy

of the space he has to fill, and is a dangerous playfellow when "at the turn." One day, while they were still children, John and Edward Irving are said to have strayed down upon these great sands, with the original intention of meeting their uncle, George Lowther, who was expected to cross Solway at the ebb, on his way to Annan. The scene was specially charming in its wild solitude and freedom. In that wilderness of sand and shingle, with its gleaming salt-water pools clear as so many mirrors, full of curious creatures still unknown to drawing-room science, but not to schoolboy observation, the boys presently forgot all about their immediate errand, and, absorbed in their own amusements, thought neither of their uncle nor of the rising tide. While thus occupied, a horseman suddenly came up to them at full gallop, seized first one and then the other of the astonished boys, and throwing them across the neck of his horse, galloped on without pausing to address a word to them, or even perceiving who they were. When they had safely reached the higher shingly bank, out of reach of the pursuing tide, he drew bridle at last, and pointed back breathless to where he had found them. The startled children, perceiving the danger they had escaped, saw the tawny waves pursuing almost to where they stood, and the sands on which they had been playing buried far under that impetuous sea; and it was only then that the happy Hercules-uncle discovered that it was his sister's sons whom he had saved. Had George Lowther been ten minutes later, one of the noblest tragic chapters of individual life in the nineteenth century need never have been written; and his native seas, less

bitter than the sea of life that swallowed him up at last, would have received the undeveloped fortunes of the blameless Annan boy.

Another momentary incident, much less picturesque and momentous, yet characteristic enough, disperses for the minutest point of time the mists of sixty years, and shows us two urgent childish petitioners, Edward with his little brother George, at the door of a neighbour's house in Annan, where there was a party, at which Mrs. Irving was one of the guests. Edward was so pertinacious in his determination to see his mother, that the circumstance impressed itself upon the memory of one of the children of the house. Mrs. Irving at last went to the door to speak to her children, probably apprehensive of some domestic accident; but found that the occasion of all this urgency was Edward's anxiety to be permitted to give some of his own linen to a sick lad who was in special want of it. The permission was given, the boys plunged joyful back into the darkness, and the mother returned to her party, where, doubtless, she told the tale with such pretended censure as mothers use. Momentary and slight as the incident is, it is still appropriate to the early history of one who in his after days could never *give* enough, to whosoever lacked.

Even at this early period of his existence, it has been said that Irving was prematurely solemn and remarkable in his manners, "making it apparent that he was not a child as others," and having "a significant elevation of manners and choice of pleasures." I can find no traces of any such precocity; nor is it easy to fancy how a natural boy, in such a shrewd and

humorous community, where pomp of any kind would have been speedily laughed out of him, could have shown any such singularity. Nor was he ever in the slightest degree of that abstract and self-absorbed fashion of mind which makes a child remarkable. He seems, however, to have sought, and got access to, a certain kind of society which, though perhaps odd enough for a schoolboy, was such as all children of lively mind and generous sympathies love. At this early period of his life it was his occasional habit on Sundays to walk five or six miles to the little village of Ecclefechan, in company with a pilgrim band of the religious patriarchs of Annan, to attend a little church established there by one of the earlier bodies of seceders from the Church of Scotland; an act which has been attributed to his dissatisfaction with the preaching and character of the Annan minister, already referred to, and his precocious appreciation of sound doctrine and fervent piety. The fact is doubtless true enough; but I think it very unlikely that any premature love for sermons or discrimination of their quality was the cause. Scotch dissenters, in their earlier development at least, were all doubly Presbyterian. The very ground of their dissent was not any widening out of doctrine or alteration of Church government, but only a re-assertion and closer return to the primitive principles of the Kirk itself—a fact which popular discrimination in the south of Scotland acknowledged by referring back to the unforgotten "persecuting times" for a name, and entitling the seceders "Whigs"—a name which they retained until very recent days in those simple-minded districts. The pious people who either originated or gladly took

advantage of such humble attempts to recall the Church to herself, and bring back religion to a covenanted but unfaithful country, were thus identified with the saints and martyrs, of whom the whole countryside was eloquent. They were, as was natural, the gravest class of the community; men who vexed their righteous souls day by day over the shortcomings of the minister and the worldly-mindedness of the people; and proved their covenanting lineage by piety of an heroic, austere pitch beyond the level of their neighbours.

Young Edward Irving had already made his way, as most imaginative children manage to do, into the confidence of the old people, who knew and were not reluctant to tell the epics of their native districts: and those epics were all covenanting tales—tragedies abrupt and forcible, or lingering, long-drawn narratives, more fascinating still, in which all human motives, hopes, and ambitions were lost in the one all-engrossing object of existence, the preservation and confession of the truth. With glowing, youthful cheeks, fresh from the moor or the frith, the boy penetrated into the cottage firesides, where the fragrant peat threw its crimson glow through the apartment, and the old man or the old woman, in the leisure of their age, sat in the great highbacked chair with its checked linen cover; and with a curiosity still more wistful and eager, as though about to see those triumphs of faith repeated, trudged forth in the summer Sunday afternoons, unbonneted, with his black locks ruffling in the wind and his cap in his hand, amid the little band of patriarchs, through hedgerows fragrant with every succession of blossom, to where the

low grey hills closed in around that little hamlet of Ecclefechan, *Ecclesia Fechanus*, forgotten shrine of some immemorial Celtic saint; a scene not grandly picturesque, but full of a sweet pastoral freedom and solitude; the hills rising grey against the sky, with slopes of springy turf, where the sheep pastured, and shepherds of an antique type pondered the ways of God with men: the road crossed at many a point, and sometimes accompanied, by tiny brooklets, too small to claim a separate name, tinkling unseen among the grass and underwood to join some bigger but still tiny tributary of the Annan, streams which had no pretensions to be rivers, but were only "waters" like Annan water itself. To me this country gleams with a perpetual youth; the hills rise clear and wistful through the sharp air, this with its Roman camp indented on its side, that with its melancholy Repentance Tower standing out upon the height; the moor brightens forth as one approaches into sweet breaks of heather and golden clumps of gorse; the burns sing in a never-failing liquid cheerfulness through all their invisible courses; freedom, breadth, silence, touched with all those delicious noises: the quiet hamlets and cottages breathing forth that aromatic betrayal of all their warm turf fires. Place in this landscape that grave group upon the way, bending their steps to the rude meeting-house in which their austere worship was to be celebrated, holding discourse as they approached upon subjects not so much of religious feeling as of high metaphysical theology; with the boy among them, curiously attracted by their talk, timing his elastic footsteps to their heavy tread, making

his unconscious comments, a wonderful impersonation of perennial youth and genius, half leading, half following, always specially impressed by the grey fathers of that world which dawns all fresh and dewy upon his own vision; and I cannot fancy a better picture of old Scotland as it was in its most characteristic districts and individual phase.

This seems the only foundation from which precocious seriousness can be inferred, and it is an important and interesting feature of his boyhood. The Whig elders no doubt unconsciously prepared the germs of that old-world stateliness of speech and dignity of manner which afterwards distinguished their pupil; and they, and the traditions to which they had served themselves heirs, made all the higher element and poetry of life which was to be found in Annan. Their influence, however, did not withdraw him from the society of his fellows. The social instinct was at all times too strong in him to be prevented from making friends wherever he found companions. His attachment to his natural comrade, his brother John, is touchingly proved by the fact we have already noted; and another boyish friendship, formed with Hugh Clapperton the African traveller, who was, like himself, a native of Annan, concluded only with the death of that intrepid explorer. Young Clapperton lived in an adjoining house, which was the property of Gavin Irving, and the same "yard" with its elm trees was common to both the families. The boys sometimes shared their meals, and often the fireside corner, where they learned their lessons; and the adventurous instinct of young Clapperton evidently

had no small influence upon the dreams, at least, of his younger companion. Of these three boys, so vigorous, bold, and daring, not one lived to be old; and their destinies are a singular proof of the wide diffusion of life and energy circling out from one of the most obscure spots in the country. One was to die in India, uncommemorated except by love; one in Africa, a hero (or victim) of that dread science which makes stepping-stones of men's lives; the third, at a greater distance still from that boyish chimney-corner, at the height of fame, genius, and sorrow, was to die, a sign and wonder, like other prophets before him. It is sad to connect the conclusion with a beginning which bore little foreboding of such tragic elements. But it is scarcely possible to note the boyish conclave without thinking of the singular fortunes and far separation to which they were destined. The friendship that commenced thus was renewed when Clapperton and Irving met in London, both famous men; and the last communication sent to England by the dying traveller was addressed to his early friend.

The little town was at this period in a prosperous condition, and thriving well. When war quickened the traffic in provisions, and increased their value, Annan exported corn as well as droves. But the industry of the population was leisurely and old-fashioned, much unlike the modern type. Many of the poorer folk about were salmon-fishers; but had no such market for their wares as now-a-days, when salmon in Annan is about as dear, and rather more difficult to be had, than salmon in London. When there had been a good "take," the fishermen lounged about the Cross, or amused themselves in their gardens, till that windfall

was spent and exhausted, very much as if they had been mere Celtic fishermen instead of cautious Scots; and the slow gains of the careful burgesses came more from economy than enterprise. Gavin Irving, however, made progress in his tanner's yard: he became one of the magistrates of Annan, whose principal duty it was to go to church in state, and set an official example of well-doing. Tradition does not say whether his son's passion for the Whigs, and expeditions to the Seceders' meeting-house at Ecclefechan, brought any "persecution" upon the boy; so it is probable those heterodox preachings were attended only in summer evenings, and on special occasions, when Annan kirk was closed. There were clerical relations on both sides of the house scattered through Dumfriesshire, to whom the boys seem to have paid occasional visits; one of them, Dr. Bryce Johnstone, of Holywood, an uncle of Mrs. Irving's, being a notable person among his brethren; but, farther than the familiarity which this gave with the surrounding country, no special traces of the advantages of such intercourse exist. The loftier aspect of religion was in the Whig cottages, and not in those cosy manses to which Dr. Carlyle, of Inveresk, has lately introduced all readers.

It would be almost impossible to exaggerate the influence which all the homely circumstances and habits of his native place exercised upon a mind so open to every influence as that of Irving. Despite his own strong individuality, he never seems to have come in contact with any mind of respectable powers without taking something from it. His eyes were always open, his ingenuous heart ever awake; and the enthusiastic admiration of which he was capable stamped such things

as appeared to him lovely, or honest, or of good repute, indelibly upon his mind. Much that would be otherwise inexplicable in his later life is explained by this; and it is not difficult to trace the workings of those early influences which surrounded him in his childhood throughout his life. That, however, will be more effectually done as the story advances than by any parallel of suggestions and acts. His school education in Annan terminated when he was only thirteen, without any distinction except that arithmetical one which has been already noted. This concluded the period of his childhood: his next step subjected him to other influences not less powerful, and directed the course of his young life away from that home which always retained his affections. The home remained planted in his kindly native soil for many years, long enough to receive his children under its roof, and many of his friends, and always honoured and distinguished by himself in its unchanging homeliness. His childish presence throws a passing light over little Annan, rude and kindly, with its fragrant aroma of peat from all the cottage fires; its quiet street, where groups of talkers gathered in many a leisurely confabulation; its neighbourly existence, close and familiar. Such places might never be heard of in the world but for the rising of individual lights which illuminate them unawares,—lights which have been frequent in Annandale. Such a tender soul as Grahame, the poet of the Sabbath, shines softly into that obscure perspective; and it flashes out before contemporary eyes, and warms upon the remembrance of after generations, in reflections from the stormy and pathetic splendour of the subject of this history.

CHAPTER II.

HIS COLLEGE-LIFE.

At thirteen Irving began his studies at the Edinburgh University: such was, and is still, to a great extent, the custom of Scotch universities,—a habit which, like every other educational habit in Scotland, promotes the diffusion of a little learning, and all the practical uses of knowledge, but makes the profounder depths of scholarship almost impossible. It was nearly universal in those days, and no doubt partly originated in the very long course of study demanded by the Church (always so influential in Scotland, and acting upon the habits even of those who are not devoted to her service), from applicants for the ministry. This lengthened process of education cannot be better described than in the words used by Irving himself, at a much later period of his life, and used with natural pride, as setting forth what his beloved Church required of her neophytes. "In respect to the ministers," he says, "this is required of them,—that they should have studied for four years in a university all the branches of a classical and philosophical education; and either taken the rank in literature of a Master of Arts, or come out from the university with certificates of their proficiency in the classics, in mathematics, in logic, and in natural and moral philosophy. They are then, and not till then,

permitted to enter upon the study of theology, of which the professors are ordained ministers of the Church, chosen to their office. Under separate professors they study theology, Hebrew, and ecclesiastical history, for four years, attending from four to six months in each year. Thus eight years are consumed in study." This is, perhaps, the only excuse which can be made for sending boys, still little more than children, into what ought to be the higher labours of a university. Even beginning at such an age, the full course of study exacted from a youth in training for the Church could not be completed till he had reached his twenty-first year, when all the repeated "trials" of the Presbytery had still to follow before he could enter upon his vocation; an apparent and comprehensible reason, if not excuse, for a custom which, according to the bitter complaints of its victims, turns the university into a kind of superior grammar school.

At thirteen, accordingly, Edward, accompanied by his elder brother John, who was destined for the medical profession, came to Edinburgh under the charge of some relatives of their Annan schoolfellow, Hugh Clapperton; and the two lads were deposited in a lofty chamber in the old town, near the college, to pursue their studies with such diligence as was in them. Even to such youthful sons the Edinburgh University has no personal shelter to offer: then, as now, the Alma Mater was a mere abstract mass of class-rooms, museums, and libraries, and the youths or boys who sought instruction there were left in absolute freedom to their own devices. Perhaps the youths thus launched upon the world were too young to take much harm; or

perhaps that early necessity of self-regulation, imposed under different and harder circumstances than those which have brought the English public schools into such fresh repute and popularity, bore all the fruit which it is now hoped and believed to produce. But whatever may be the virtues of self-government, it is impossible to contemplate without a singular interest and amaze, the spectacle of these two boys, one thirteen, the other, probably, about fifteen, placed alone in their little lodging in the picturesque but noisy old town of Edinburgh, for six long months at a stretch, to manage themselves and their education, without tutors, without home care, without any stimulus but that to be received in the emulation of the class-room, or from their books and their own ambition. These circumstances, however, were by no means remarkable or out of the common course of things; and the surprise with which we look back to so strange a picture of boyish life would not have been shared by the contemporary spectators who saw the south-country boys coming and going to college without perceiving anything out of the way in it. The manner in which the little establishment was kept up is wonderfully primitive to hear of at so short a distance from our sophisticated times. Now and then the lads received a box from home, sent by the carrier, or by some "private opportunity," full of oatmeal, cheese, and other homely necessities, and doubtless not without lighter embellishments to prove the mother's care for her boys. Probably their linen was conveyed back and forward to the home-laundry by the same means; so that the *money* expense of the tiny establishment, with its por-

ridge thus provided, and its home relishes of ham and cheese, making the schoolboy board festive, must have been of the most limited amount. Altogether it is a quaint little picture of the patriarchal life, now departed for ever. No private opportunities now-a-days carry such boxes; and those very railways, which make the merest village next neighbour to all the world, have made an end of those direct primitive communications from the family table to its absent members. Nor is it easy to believe that boys of thirteen, living in lonely independence in Edinburgh, where the very streets are seducing and full of fascinations, and where every gleam of sunshine on the hills, and flash of reflection from the visible Firth must draw youthful thoughts away from the steep *gradus* of a learning not hitherto found particularly attractive, could live within those strait and narrow limits and bear such a probation. But times were harder and simpler in the first twenty years of the century. Scotland was a hundred times more Scotch, more individual, more separate from its wealthier yoke-fellow than now. No greater contrast to the life of undergraduates in an ancient English university, could be imagined, than that presented by those boy-students in their lofty chamber, detached from all collegiate associations, living in the midst of a working-day population, utterly unimpressed by the neighbourhood of a university, and interpolating the homely youthful idyll of their existence into the noisy, bustling, scolding, not over-savoury life of that old town of Edinburgh. Even such a vestige of academical dress as is to be found in the quaint red gown of Glasgow is unknown to the rigid Protestantism of the Scotch metropolis.

The boys came and went, undistinguished, in their country caps and jackets, through streets, which, full of character as they are, suggest nothing so little as the presence of a college, and returned to their studies in their little room, with neither tutor nor assistant to help them through their difficulties, and lived a life of unconscious austerity, in which they themselves did not perceive either the poverty or the hardship; which, indeed, it is probable they themselves, and all belonging to them, would have been equally amazed and indignant to have heard either hardship or poverty attributed to. Crowds of other lads, from all parts of Scotland, lived a similar life; the homely fare and spare accommodation, the unassisted studies; and in most cases, as soon as that was practicable, personal exertions as teachers or otherwise, to help in the expense of their own education, looked almost a natural and inevitable beginning to the life they were to lead.

By such methods of instruction few men are trained to pursue and love learning for learning's sake; but only by such a Spartan method of training the young soldiers of the future, could the Annan tanner, with eight children to provide for, have given all his sons an education qualifying them for professional life and future advancement.

The Edinburgh "Session" lasts only from November till May; leaving the whole summer free for the recreation, or, more probably, the labours of the self-supporting students. Indeed, the whole system seems based upon the necessity of allowing time for the intervening work which is to provide means for the studies that follow. When the happy time of release

arrived, our Annan boys sent off their boxes with the carrier, and, all joyful and vigorous, set out walking upon the homeward road. In after years Irving delighted in pedestrian journeys; and it was most probably in those early walks that he learned, what was his habitual practice afterwards, to rest in the wayside cottages, and share the potato or the porridge to be found there. The habit of universal friendliness thus engendered did him good service afterwards—for a man, accustomed to such kindly relations with the poorest of his neighbours, does not need any other training to that frank uncondescending courtesy which is so dear to the poor. "Edward walked as the crow flies," says one of his surviving relatives who has accompanied those walks when time was. Such an eccentric, joyful, straightforward progress must have been specially refreshing to the schoolboy students, hastening to all the delights of home and country freedom.

Whether Irving's progress during this period was beyond that of his contemporaries there is no evidence; but he succeeded sufficiently well to take his degree in April 1809, when he was just seventeen, and to attract the friendly regard of Professor Christison, and of the distinguished and eccentric Sir John Leslie, then Mathematical Professor in the Edinburgh University; both of whom interested themselves in his behalf as soon as he began his own independent career. So far as the library records go, he does not seem to have been an extraordinarily diligent student. There is a story told, which I have not been able to trace to any authentic source, of his having found in a farm-house, in the

neighbourhood of Annan, a copy of Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, which is said to have powerfully attracted him, and given an impulse to his thoughts. He is also said to have expended almost the whole sum which he had received for the expenses of a journey in the purchase of Hooker's works; "together with some odd folios of the Fathers, Homer, and Newton," and to have trudged forward afoot with the additional load upon his stalwart shoulders, in great delight with his acquisition. There can be no doubt, at least, of his own reference to "the venerable companion of my early days—Richard Hooker." In opposition to this serious reading stand the *Arabian Nights*, and sundry books with forgotten but suspicious titles, which appear against his name in those early times in the College library books—most natural and laudable reading for a boy, but curiously inappropriate as drawn from the library of his College. "He used to carry continually in his waistcoat pocket," says one of his few surviving college companions, the Rev. Dr. Grierson, of Errol, "a miniature copy of Ossian; passages from which he read or recited in his walks in the country, or delivered with sonorous elocution and vehement gesticulation" for the benefit of his companions. This is the first indication I can find of his oratorical gifts, and that natural magniloquence of style which belonged equally to his mind and person.

Society in Edinburgh was at this period in its culmination. Those were the "Edinburgh Review" days, when the brilliant groups whose reputation is more entirely identified with Edinburgh than that of generations still more exclusively her own, were in full

possession of the field. Looking back, the town seems so occupied and filled by that brotherhood, that it is hard to imagine the strains of life all unconscious of its existence, and scarcely influenced, even unconsciously, by its vicinity, which went serenely on within the same limited boundaries; and it is still harder to fancy a youth of genius pursuing his youthful way into the secrets of literature in Edinburgh without the slightest link of connection with the brilliant lettered society which gave tone and character to the place. But the Antipodes are not farther off from us than were the lights of Edinburgh society from the rustic student labouring through his classes. As distinct as if they had belonged to different countries, or different centuries, were the young lawyers, not much richer, but standing on the threshold of public life, with all its possibilities, and the young clerical students, looking, as the highest hope of their ambition, to the pulpit of a parish church, with a stipend attached of two or three hundred a year at the utmost. In actual means the one might not be much in advance of the other; but in hopes, prospects, and surroundings, how widely different! Beneath that firmament, flashing with light and splendour, the common day went on unconscious, concealing its other half-dawned lights. Among all the fellow-students of Edward Irving, there are no names which have attained more than local celebrity, except that of Thomas Carlyle, whose fame has overtopped and outlasted that of his early friend; and Carlyle did not share the studies of the four first years of his college life. He stands alone among men who subsided into parishes, and chaplaincies, and educational chairs; but who were his

equals, or more than his equals, in those days—without any connection with, or means of approach to, that splendid circle which, one would imagine, concentrated within so limited a sphere as that of Edinburgh, must have found out by magnetic attraction every light of genius within its bounds. But the ecclesiastical flats in which the youth stood, together with his humble origin, more than counteracted that magnetism. If the Church everywhere never fails to be reminded that her kingdom is not of this world, that reminder is specially thrust upon her in Scotland, where it is a principle of the creed of both ministers and people to believe that even the payment in kind of applause and honour, which is gained in every other profession, is a sinful indulgence to a preacher; and where demands are made upon his time and patience far too engrossing to admit the claims of society. Irving went on in his early career far down in the shade of common life, out of reach of those lights which, to the next generation, illuminate the entire sphere—and grew from a boy to a young man, and took his boyish share in the college debating societies, and made his way among other nameless youths with no great mark of difference, so far as it appears. Dr. Christison, the Humanity professor, noted him with a friendly eye; and odd, clumsy, kindly Leslie observed the fervour of the tall lad, and took him for a future prop of science. A younger fellow-student records simply how Irving, being more advanced than he, helped him on with his studies, according to that instinct of his nature which never forsook him. And he read Ossian, and argued in defunct Philomathic societies, where he and other

people fancied he met equal opponents; till it became necessary for him, seventeen years old, and a graduate of Edinburgh University, to begin to help himself onwards, during the tedious intervals of his professional training.

He did this, as all Scotch clerical students do, by teaching. A new school, called the Mathematical School, by some strange caprice, — since it seems to have been exactly like other schools — had just been established in Haddington; and by the recommendation of Sir John Leslie and of Professor Christison, Irving got the appointment. It was in the spring of 1810, after one session, as it is called, in the "Divinity Hall," and at the age of eighteen, that he entered upon this situation. To somewhere about the same period must belong the description given of him in Carlyle's wonderful "*Eloge*." "The first time I saw Irving was in his native town of Annan. He was fresh from Edinburgh, with college prizes, high character and promise: he had come to see our schoolmaster, who had also been his. We heard of famed professors, of high matters classical, mathematical, a whole wonderland of knowledge; nothing but joy, health, hopefulness without end looked out from the blooming young man."

Another spectator of more prosaic vision declares him to have been "rather a showy young man" — a tendency always held in abhorrence by the sober Scotch imagination, which above all things admires the gift of reticence; or even, in default of better, that pride which takes the place of modesty. Irving, utterly ingenuous and open, always seeking love, and the approbation of love, and doubting no man, did not possess this quality.

"The blooming young man" went back to the school in which he was once kept in and punished, with candid, joyful self-demonstration, captivating the eyes which could see, and amusing those which had not that faculty. It was his farewell to his boyish, happy, dependent life.

And it was also the conclusion of his University education so far as reality went. For four or five years thereafter he was what is called a *partial* student of Divinity, matriculating regularly, and making his appearance at college to go through the necessary examinations, and deliver the prescribed discourses; but carrying on his intermediate studies by himself, according to a license permitted by the Church. His Haddington appointment removed him definitely from home and its homely provisions, and gave him an early outset for himself into the business and labours of independent life. So far from being a hardship, or matter to be lamented, it was the best thing his friends could have wished for him. Such interruptions in the course of professional education were all but universal in Scotland; and he went under the best auspices and with the highest hopes.

CHAPTER III.

HADDINGTON.

IRVING entered upon this second chapter of his youthful life in the summer of 1810. He was then in his eighteenth year — still young enough, certainly, for the charge committed to him. Education was at a very low ebb in Haddington, which had not even a parish school to boast of, but was lost among "borough" regulations, and in the pottering hands of a little corporation. The rising tide, however, stirred a faint ripple in this quiet place; and the consequence was, the establishment of that school called the mathematical, to which came groups of lads not very much younger than the young teacher, who had been stupefied for years in such schools as did exist; and some of whom woke up like magic under the touch of the boy-student, so little older than themselves. Coming to the little town under these circumstances, recommended as a distinguished student by a man of such eminence as Sir John Leslie, the young man had a favourable reception in his new sphere. "When Irving first came to Haddington," writes one of his pupils, "he was a tall, ruddy, robust, handsome youth, cheerful and kindly disposed; he soon won the confidence of his advanced pupils, and was admitted into the best society in the town and neighbourhood." Into one house, at least, he

went with a more genial introduction, and under circumstances equally interesting and amusing, This was the house of Dr. Welsh, the principal medical man of the district, whose family consisted of one little daughter, for whose training he entertained more ambitious views than little girls are generally the subjects of. This little girl, however, was as unique in mind as in circumstances. She heard, with eager childish wonder, a perennial discussion carried on between her father and mother about her education; both were naturally anxious to secure the special sympathy and companionship of their only child. The doctor, recovering from his disappointment that she *was* a girl, was bent upon educating her like a boy, to make up as far as possible for the unfortunate drawback of sex; while her mother, on the contrary, hoped for nothing higher in her daughter than the sweet domestic companion most congenial to herself. The child, who was not supposed to understand, listened eagerly, as children invariably do listen to all that is intended to be spoken over their heads. Her ambition was roused; to be educated like a boy became the object of her entire thoughts, and set her little mind working with independent projects of its own. She resolved to take the first step in this awful but fascinating course, on her own responsibility. Having already divined that Latin was the first grand point of distinction, she made up her mind to settle the matter by learning Latin. A copy of the *Rudiments* was quickly found in the lumber-room of the house, and a tutor not much further off in a humble student of the neighbourhood. The little scholar had a dramatic instinct; she did not pour forth her first lesson

as soon as it was acquired, or rashly betray her secret. She waited the fitting place and moment. It was evening, when dinner had softened out the asperities of the day: the doctor sat in luxurious leisure in his dressing-gown and slippers, sipping his coffee; and all the cheerful accessories of the fireside picture were complete. The little heroine had arranged herself under the table, under the crimson folds of the cover, which concealed her small person. All was still: the moment had arrived: "*penna, pennæ, pennam!*" burst forth the little voice in breathless steadiness. The result may be imagined: the doctor smothered his child with kisses, and even the mother herself had not a word to say; the victory was complete.

After this pretty scene, the proud doctor asked Sir John Leslie to send him a tutor for the little pupil who had made so promising a beginning. Sir John recommended the youthful teacher who was already in Haddington, and Edward Irving became the teacher of the little girl. Their hours of study were from six to eight in the morning—which inclines one to imagine that, in spite of his fondness, the excellent doctor must have held his household under Spartan discipline; and again in the evening after school hours. When the young tutor arrived in the dark of the winter mornings, and found his little pupil, scarcely dressed, peeping out of her room, he used to snatch her up in his arms, and carry her to the door, to name to her the stars shining in the cold firmament, hours before dawn; and when the lessons were over, he set the child up on the table at which they had been pursuing their studies, and taught her logic, to the great tribulation of

the household, in which the little philosopher pushed her inquiries into the puzzling metaphysics of life. The greatest affection sprang up, as was natural, between the child and her young teacher, whose heart at all times of his life was always open to children. After the lapse of all these years, their companionship looks both pathetic and amusing. A life-long friendship sprang out of that early connection. The pupil, with all the enthusiasm of childhood, believed everything possible to the mind which gave its first impulse to her own; and the teacher never lost the affectionate, indulgent love with which the little woman, thus confided to his boyish care, inspired him. Their intercourse did not have the romantic conclusion it might have been supposed likely to end in; but, as a friendship, existed unbroken through all kinds of vicissitudes; and even through entire separation, disapproval, and outward estrangement, to the end of Irving's life.

When the lessons were over it was a rule that the young teacher should leave a daily report of his pupil's progress; when, alas, that report was *pessima*, the little girl was punished. One day he paused long before putting his sentence upon paper. The culprit sat on the table, small, downcast, and conscious of failure. The preceptor lingered remorsefully over his verdict, wavering between justice and mercy. At last he looked up at her with pitiful looks, "Jane, my heart is broken!" cried the sympathetic tutor, "but I *must* tell the truth;" and with reluctant pen he wrote the dread deliverance, *pessima!* The small offender doubtless forgot the penalty that followed; but she has not yet

forgotten the compassionate dilemma in which truth was the unwilling conqueror.

The youth who entered his house under such circumstances soon became a favourite guest at the fireside of the Doctor, who, himself a man of education and intelligence, and of that disposition which makes men beloved, was not slow to find out the great qualities of his young visitor. There are some men who seem born to the inalienable good fortune of lighting upon the best people — "the most worthy" according to Irving's own expression long afterwards — wherever they go. Irving's happiness in this way began at Haddington. The Doctor's wife seems to have been one of those fair, sweet women whose remembrance lasts longer than greatness. There is no charm of beauty more delightful than that fragrance of it which lingers for generations in the place where it has been an unconsciously refining and tender influence. The Annandale youth came into a little world of humanizing graces when he entered that atmosphere; and it was only natural that he should retain the warmest recollection of it throughout his life. It must have been of countless benefit to him in this early stage of his career. The main quality in himself which struck observers was — in strong and strange contradiction to the extreme devotion of *belief* manifested in his latter years — the critical and almost sceptical tendency of his mind, impatient of superficial "received truths," and eager for proof and demonstration of everything. Perhaps mathematics, which then reigned paramount in his mind, were to blame; he was as anxious to discuss, to prove and disprove, as a Scotch student fresh from college is naturally disposed

to be. It was a peculiarity natural to his age and condition; and as his language was always inclined to the superlative, and his feelings invariably took part in every matter which commended itself to his mind, it is probable that this inclination showed with a certain exaggeration to surrounding eyes. "This youth will scrape a hole in everything he is called on to believe," said the doctor;—a strange prophecy, looking at it by that light of events which unfold so many unthought-of meanings in all predictions.

In the meantime he made himself popular in the town; and apart from the delightful vignette above, appears in all his natural picturesque individuality in other recollections. The young master of the mathematical school commended himself to the hearts of those whose sons he had quickened out of dunces into intelligent prize-winning pupils. He was young and poor, and in a humble position still; but he attracted the warm admiration of the boys, and that enthusiasm which only young creatures in the early blush of existence can entertain for their elders. The means by which he won the hearts of those lads is simple and apparent enough. Though he was severe and peremptory in school,—"a sad tyrant," somebody says,—out of doors he had just that delightful mixture of superior wisdom, yet equal innocence,—that junction of the teacher and the companion which is irresistible to all generous young people. Enthusiastic in his mathematical studies as he had come from Edinburgh, and loving the open air as became an Annandale lad of eighteen, he contrived to connect science and recreation in a social brotherly fashion quite his own. "Having the use of some fine

instruments," says one of his pupils, Patrick Sheriff, Esq., of Haddington, "he devoted many of his school holidays to the measuring of heights and distances in the surrounding neighbourhood, and taking the altitudes of heavenly bodies. Upon such occasions he was invariably accompanied by several of his pupils." When the state of the atmosphere, or any other obstacle, interrupted the particular object of the day's excursion, the young teacher readily and joyfully diverged into the athletic games in which he excelled; and with the scientific instruments standing harmless by, enjoyed his holiday as well as if everything had been favourable for their use. Another picturesque glimpse of the boy-philosopher follows. "About this time Mr. Irving frequently expressed a wish to travel in Africa in the track of Mungo Park, and during his holiday excursions practised, in concert with his pupils, the throwing of stones into pools of water, with the view of determining the depth of the water by the sound of the plunge, to aid him in crossing rivers;" a species of scientific inquiry into which, I have no doubt, the Haddington boys would enter with devotion. This idea of travel, not unnatural to the school-fellow of Hugh Clapperton, seems to have returned on many occasions to Irving's mind, and to have displayed itself in various characteristic studies, as unlike the ordinary course of preparation for a journey as the above bit of holiday science. His great bodily strength and dauntless spirit made the idea congenial to him, and he had no very brilliant prospects at home; indeed, this thought seems to run, a kind of adventurous possibility, through a great part of his life, changing in aspect as his own projects and feelings

changed; and to have afforded his mind a refuge from the fastidious intolerance of youth when that came upon him, or when cross circumstances and adverse persons drove him back at bitter moments upon himself.

"Being an excellent walker," continues the gentleman already quoted, "all his excursions were made on foot. Upon one occasion when Dr. Chalmers, then rising into fame, was announced to preach in St. George's, Edinburgh, upon a summer week-day evening, Irving set out from Haddington after school-hours, accompanied by several of his pupils, and returned the same night, accomplishing a distance of about thirty-five miles without any other rest than what was obtained in church." The fatigue of this long walk was enlivened when the little party arrived at the church by a little outbreak of imperious pugnacity, not, perhaps, quite seemly in such a place, but characteristic enough. Tired with their walk, the boys and their youthful leader made their way up to the gallery of the church, where they directed their steps towards one particular pew which was quite unoccupied. Their entrance into the vacant place was, however, stopped by a man, who stretched his arm across the pew and announced that it was engaged. Irving remonstrated, and represented that at such a time all the seats were open to the public, but without effect. At last his patience gave way; and raising his hand he exclaimed, evidently with all his natural magniloquence of voice and gesture, "Remove your arm, or I will shatter it in pieces!" His astonished opponent fell back in utter dismay, like Mrs. Siddons' shopman, and made a precipitate retreat, while the rejoicing boys took possession of the pew. Thus, for

the first time, Irving and Chalmers were brought, if not together, at least into the same assembly. The great preacher knew nothing of the lad who had come nearly eighteen miles to hear him preach, and sat resting his mighty youthful limbs in the seat from which he had driven his enemy. Such glimpses are curious and full of interest, especially in remembrance of other days which awaited Chalmers and Irving in that same church of St. George.

To return to Haddington, however; Irving not only established his place as a warm and life-long friend in the house of the Doctor, but made his way into the homes and society of many of the worthy inhabitants of the little town. Among those who had children at the Mathematical School and opened his house to the teacher, was Gilbert Burns, the brother of the poet, with whom he is said to have had some degree of intimacy; and though the humble position of Dominie did not give him a very high place in the social scale, and restricted his friendships within the circle of those whose sons he educated, there were a sufficiently large number of the latter to make their young preceptor known and received at most of the good houses in Haddington.

"Social supper parties," says Mr. Alexander Inglis, once a resident in Haddington, who has kindly furnished me with some recollections of this period, "were much the custom at this time in Haddington, and the hospitalities generally extended far into the night. At these social meetings Irving was occasionally in the habit of broaching some of his singular opinions about the high destinies of the human race in heaven,

where the saints were not only to be made 'kings and priests unto God,' but were to rule and judge angels. Dr. Lorimer (the senior minister of the town) used to hint that there were many more profitable and useful subjects in the New Testament for a divinity student to occupy his thoughts about than such speculations; but Irving was not to be put down in this way. 'Dare either you or I deprive God of the glory and thanks due to his name for this, exceeding great reward?' cried the impetuous young man, according to the report of his old friend: the good Doctor's ready reply was, 'Well, well, my dear friend, both you and I can be saved without knowing about that.'".

Here Irving also made the acquaintance of Mr. Stewart, then minister of Bolton, afterwards Dr. Stewart of Erskine, who was himself the subject of a sufficiently romantic story. This gentleman had been a medical man, and in that capacity had cured the daughter of a Scotch nobleman of supposed consumption. The physician and patient, after the most approved principles of poetical justice, fell in love with each other and married, and the former changed his profession, and becoming a minister, settled down in the parish of Bolton, and became doubly useful to his people and the neighbourhood in his double capacity. He too had been able to discern in some degree those qualities of mind and heart, which, despite his vehement speech and impatience, and love of argumentation, showed themselves in the young schoolmaster. In this Manse of Bolton Irving was in the habit of spending his Saturdays, along with a young fellow-student of his own, Mr. Story, afterwards of Rosneath. Nor was he without

society of his own age and standing. In those days, when long walks were habitual to everybody, Haddington was within reach of Edinburgh; perhaps more distinctly within reach than now, when, instead of the long pleasant summer afternoon walk, costing nothing, the rapid railway, with inevitable shillings and sixpences, and fixed hours of coming and going, does away with distance, yet magnifies the walk into a journey. On Saturdays and holidays there was no lack of visitors. A tide of eager young life palpitated about the teacher-student, even in that retirement,—life of a wonderfully different fashion from that which issues from English universities; confined to limits much more narrow, and bound to practical necessities; a world more hard and real. Among these comrades there were perhaps scarcely two or three individuals whose studies were not professional; and among the professional students only a small number who were not, like Irving himself, taxing their youthful strength to procure the means of prosecuting their studies. With theological students in particular this was almost the rule; for few were the fortunate men who were rich enough to spend their eight long years entirely in study. Doubtless this fact gave a certain individual character to the little groups who came to share the liberal boyish hospitality of the young schoolmaster, and filled with much clangor of logic and eager Scottish argumentation his little rooms. Some youthful wits among them took pleasure in aggravating the vehement temper of their young host, and stirring him into characteristic outbreaks,—the language which afterwards became so splendid being then, it is evident, somewhat magniloquent, and his

natural impetuosity warm with all the passion of youth. But the names of them have passed away, or live in merely local recollection; some became teachers of some distinction in Edinburgh; others, and not a few, went abroad and died off in colonial chaplaincies; some, the most fortunate, settled down into respectable parish ministers. But who knows anything about those Browns and Dicksons now?

Irving was also a member of a local literary society, which he helped to originate among young men native to the burgh. The fashion of their meetings seems to have been an excellent one. They were in the habit of setting out together to some place of interest near them, often to dainty Dirleton, that pretty artificial village which is one of the boasts of East Lothian, and after the walk and talk of the road holding their *séance* there — a method which no doubt made their essays and discussions more reasonable, so far as reason was to be expected. It was thus not without activity of mind, cultivated, so far as that was practicable, and kept in constant stimulation by contact with his compeers, that this period of his life was passed. He seems to have taught most things common to elementary education in his mathematical school; with Latin of course, the unfailing representative of higher knowledge, and key to advancement, as it has been long considered in Scotland; and to his more advanced and more congenial pupils, the same who carried his instruments after him afield, and threw stones with him in zealous devotion, unfolded the mysteries of mathematics. His life must have been sufficiently laborious to need all the relaxations possible to it. Start-

ing at six in the morning — not always in winter mornings, certainly, though the idea instinctively recalls the icy chill of those starry hours before dawn, to the unheroic hearer — to conjugate Latin verbs with the little maid, who perhaps did not apprehend all that her ambition was to bring upon her; then returning to his fifty boys, to school them in all the different fundamentals of plain unembellished knowledge (and the teacher himself was not always immaculate in his spelling); with again another private lesson after the fifty had gone to their sports,— those sports in which the eighteen-year old lad was scarcely above joining,— close exercise for the youthful brain and athletic developing form, to which some counterbalance of strenuous physical exertion was necessary.

His independence seems now to have been complete. In his humble Haddington lodgings he was no longer indebted even for his oatmeal and cheese to the home household, but had set out manful and early on the road of life for himself. Henceforward Edward's expenses did not rank among the cares of the Annan home. At seventeen and a half the young man took up his own burden without a word or token of complaint; and ever after bore it courageously through all discouragements and trials, never breaking down or falling back upon the love, which, notwithstanding, his stout heart always trusted in. Neither genius, nor that temperament of genius, impassioned and visionary, which he possessed to a large extent, weakened his performance of this first duty which manifested itself to his eyes; and he seems to have accepted his lot with a certain noble

simplicity, neither resenting it, nor quarrelling with those whom circumstances made temporarily his superiors. Either people did not ill-use him, or he had some secret power of endurance which turns ill-usage aside. At all events, it is certain that the agonies of the sensitive, not sufficiently respected tutor, or the commotions of the indignant one, have no place whatever in Irving's youthful life. When the Haddington corporation, not likely to be the most considerate masters in the world, afflicted their young schoolmaster, it is to be supposed that he blazed up at them manfully, and got done with it. At least he has no complaints to make, or old slights to remember; nor does it seem that he ever sulked at his humble position or close labours at any time in his life.

Irving remained two years at Haddington, during which time he began that singular grave pretence of theological education which is called "partial" study in the Divinity Hall. From the little Haddington school he was promoted, always with the good offices of Sir John Leslie, who seems to have had a sincere kindness for him, to the mastership of a newly established academy in Kirkcaldy; in which place he spent a number of years, and decided various important matters deeply concerning his future life.

CHAPTER IV.

KIRKCALDY.

"THE lang town of Kirkcaldy" extends along the northern side of the Firth of Forth, and is one of the most important of that long line of little towns—fishing, weaving, trading centres of local activity,—which gleam along the margin of Fife, and help to make an abrupt but important edge to the golden fertile fringe which, according to a pretty, antique description, adorns the "russet mantle" of that characteristic county. These little towns extend in a scattered, broken line, downward from Queensferry, till the coast rounds off into St. Andrew's Bay; and are full of a busy yet leisurely industry, sometimes quickened almost into the restless pulse of trade. Kirkcaldy earned its title of the "lang town" from the prolonged line of its single street, running parallel to the shore for rather more than a mile, and at that time had not widened into proportionate breadth, nor invested itself with tiny suburbs and the body of scattered population which now gives it importance. In the year 1812 there was no school in this flourishing and comfortable place, except the parish school, with its confusion of ranks and profound Republicanism of letters, where boys and girls of all classes were rudely drilled into the common elements of education, with

such climaxes of Latin and mathematics as were practicable. The professional people of Kirkcaldy, headed by the minister, who had himself a large family of children to educate, and the well-to-do shopkeepers and householders of the place, determined, accordingly, upon the establishment of a new school, of higher pretensions, and Edward Irving was selected as its first master. Two rooms in a central "wynd," opening into each other, with a tiny class-room attached—now occupied by a humble schoolmaster, who points to his worm-eaten oaken desks as being those used by "the great Mr. Irving"—were simply fitted up into the new academy.

Without any accessories to command respect, in a humble locality, with a cobbler's hutch in the sunk story beneath, and common houses crowding round, the new institution, notwithstanding, impressed respect upon the town, and soon became important. Boys and girls, as was usual, sat together at those brown oaken desks without the least separation, and pursued their studies together with mutual rivalry. For some time Irving managed them alone, but afterwards had an assistant, and in this employment remained for seven years, and had the training of a generation in his hands. The recollection of him is still fresh in the town; his picturesque looks, his odd ways, his severities, his kindnesses, the distinct individuality of the man. Here that title which afterwards was to be the popular designation of a religious community came into playful use, long and innocently antedating its more permanent meaning, and the academy scholars distinguished each other as "Irving-

ites,"—a special and affectionate bond of fraternity. He was now twenty, and had attained his full height, which some say was two, and some four inches over six feet; his appearance was noble and remarkable to a high degree, his features fine, his figure, in its great height, fully developed and vigorous; the only drawback to his good looks being the defect in his eye, which, with so many and great advantages to counterbalance it, seems rather to have given piquancy to his face than to have lessened its attraction. Such a figure attracted universal attention: he could not pass through a village without being remarked and gazed after; and some of his Kirkcaldy pupils remember the moment when they first saw him, with the clearness which marks, not an ordinary meeting, but an event. This recollection is perhaps assisted by the fact, that though a divinity student, already overshadowed by the needful gravity of the priesthood, and in present possession of all the importance of a "Dominie," he had no such solemn regard to dress as afterwards became one of his peculiarities, but made his appearance in Kirkcaldy in a morning coat made of some *set* of tartan in which red predominated, to the admiration of all beholders.

A young man of twenty, with the full charge of a large number of boys and girls, in a limited space, and undertaking all the items of a miscellaneous education, no doubt needed the assistance of a somewhat rigorous discipline, and it is evident that he used its help with much freedom. Sounds were heard now and then proceeding from the schoolroom which roused the pity and indignation of the audience of neighbours out of doors. One of these, a joiner, deacon of his trade, and

a man of great strength, is reported to have appeared one day, with his shirt-sleeves rolled up to his elbows and an axe on his shoulder, at the door of the school-room, asking, "Do ye want a hand* the day, Mr. Irving?" with dreadful irony. Another ludicrous mistake testifies to the general notion that careless scholars occasionally got somewhat hard measure from the young master. Some good men loitering about their gardens, in the neighbourhood of the "academy," heard outcries which alarmed them; and, convinced that murder was being accomplished in the school, set off to save the victim; but discovered, to their great discomfiture, that the cries which had attracted their sympathy came from an unfortunate animal under the hands of a butcher, and not from a tortured schoolboy. These severe measures, however, by no means obliterate the pleasanter recollection with which Irving's pupils recall his reign at the academy. It was not in his nature to work among even a set of schoolboys without identifying himself with them, and carrying them with *him* into all the occupations and amusements which they could possibly be made to bear a share in. On the holidays the young teacher might be seen with both boys and girls in his train, issuing forth to the fields with such scientific instruments as he could command, giving them lessons in mensuration and surveying, which, half in sport and half in earnest, doubtless, were not without their use to the fortunate lads thus promoted to share his hours of leisure. The same lads went with him to the Firth, where he renewed those

* Anglicè—*assistance*, a helper.

feats of swimming which had distinguished him on the Solway; and, sometimes with an urchin on his shoulder, sometimes holding an oar or a rope to sustain the more advanced, sometimes lending the aid of his own vigorous arm, the young Hercules taught, or endeavoured to teach, his pupils to be as fearless in the water as himself. If he might sometimes happen to be discontented with his occupation, as was very possible, it never occurred to Irving to evidence that feeling by doing just as little as could be demanded of him. Exactly the reverse was the impulse of his generous, single-minded nature. He went into it with all the fresh, natural fulness of his heart. He never seems to have attempted making any division of himself. And this is no picture of an interesting student compelled to turn aside from his studies by the necessity of maintaining himself—and if not resentful, at least preserving a certain reserve and pathetical injured aspect towards the world, as there are so many; but an entire individual man, full of the highest ambition, yet knowing no possibility of any other course of conduct than that of doing what his hand found to do, with all his heart, as freely as if he had loved the work for its own sake. With such a disposition, he could not even enter into any work without insensibly getting to love it, and spending himself freely, with exuberant volunteer efforts not demanded of him. Under no circumstances was indifference possible to this young man; though, even then, it is very apparent, prophetic visions of a very different audience, and of future possibilities which no one else dreamt of, were with him in the midst of his hearty and cordial labours.

Thus for a circle of years his remarkable figure pervades that little town; seen every day upon the shore, pacing up and down the yellow sands with books and meditations,—the great Firth rolling in at his feet in waves more grand and less impetuous than those of his native Solway; with green islands gleaming in the light, and Arthur's Seat looming out through the Edinburgh smoke in the distance, a moody lion; and many a moonlight night upon the same shore, collecting round him his little band of eager disciples, to point out the stars in their courses, and communicate such poetical elements of astronomy as were congenial to such a scene. These latter meetings were disturbed and brought to a conclusion in a whimsical homely fashion. One season it happened that, on two different occasions when they met, falling stars were seen. Forthwith some of the common people took up the notion that Irving drew down the stars, or at least knew when they were to fall. They accordingly watched for him and his pupils, and pushing in amongst them with ignorant, half-superstitious curiosity, broke up the little conclave. A curious incident in which a fanciful observer might see some dim, mystic anticipations of a future not yet revealed even to its hero. Indoors, in his own domain, as the different classes went on with their lessons, he moved about in perpetual activity, seldom sitting down, and always fully intent upon the progress of his flock. Now and then he gave them a holiday, on condition of receiving afterwards an essay describing how they had spent their time — receiving in return some amusing productions largely taken up with bird's nesting and other such exploits of rustic boyhood. Both French

and Italian, in addition to the steadier routine of Latin and mathematics, seem to have been attempted by the ardent young teacher; and his own class read Milton with him, learning large portions of *Paradise Lost* by heart. "Wherever the sense seemed involved, the pupils were required to re-arrange the sentence and give it in prose. This implied a thorough understanding of the passage and appreciation of its meaning." Altogether a system of education of a lofty optimist character, quite as rare and unusual in the present day as at that time. It is said that one of his older pupils came on one occasion to this same Milton Class before the arrival of her companions, and on reaching the door of the class-room, found Irving alone, reciting to himself one of the speeches of Satan, with so much emphasis and so gloomy a countenance, that the terrified girl, unable to conceal her fright, fled precipitately. Some of his pupils — and among these, one or two girls — came to high proficiency in the mathematical studies, which were specially dear to their young instructor; and — much apart from mathematics — Irving so managed to impress his spirit upon the lads under his charge, that the common conjunction of boys and girls in this school became the means of raising a certain chivalrous spirit, not naturally abounding among schoolboys, in Kirkcaldy and its academy. That spirit of chivalry which, under the form of respect to women, embodies the truest magnanimous sentiment of strength, rose involuntarily among the youths commanded by such a leader. They learned to suspend their very snowball *bickers* till the girls had passed out of harm's way; and awing the less fortunate *gamins* of the little town by

their sturdy championship, made the name of "an academy lassie" a defence against all annoyance. The merest snowball directed against the sacred person of one of these budding women was avenged by the generous zeal of the "Irvingites." The girls perhaps on their side were not equally considerate, but won prizes over the heads of their stronger associates with no compunction, and took their full share of the labours, though scarcely of the penalties of the school. Amusing anecdotes of the friendship existing between the teacher and his pupils are told on all sides: his patience and consideration in childish disasters, and prompt activity when accidents occurred; and even his readiness to be joked with when times were propitious. It was necessary to secure beforehand, however, that times *were* propitious. On one such sunshiny occasion some of the boys propounded the old stock riddle about the seven wives with their stock of cats and kits "whom I met going to St. Ives"— and the whole school looked on, convulsed with secret titterings, while their simple-minded master went on jotting down upon his black board in visible figures the repeated sevens of that tricky composition. Their floggings do not seem to have much damped the spirit of the Kirkcaldy boys, or diminished their confidence in their teacher.

During the early part of Irving's residence in Kirkcaldy he was still a partial student at the Divinity Hall. During the first three winters he had to go over to Edinburgh now and then, to deliver the discourses which were necessary, in order to keep up his standing as a student. "On these occasions," says the lady from whose notes the chief details of his Kirkcaldy history

are taken, "to ensure his pupils losing as little as possible, he used to ask them to meet him at the school at six, or half-past six, in the morning. This arrangement enabled him to go over the most important of the lessons before the hour at which the fly started to meet the passage-boat at Kinghorn"—that being, before the age of steamers, the most rapid conveyance between Fife and Edinburgh. On his return from one such expedition, he himself describes how, "in fear of a tedious passage across the ferry under night, I requested from a friend of mine in Edinburgh a book, which, by combining instruction with amusement, might at once turn to account the time, and relieve the tiresomeness of the voyage." The book was *Rasselas;* and was afterwards sent, with an amusingly elaborate, schoolmaster note, to two young ladies, whom the young teacher (who afterwards made one of them his wife) addresses as "My much respected pupils." The friend who lent the book desired it to be given as a prize to the best scholar in the school, and having been present at the examination, distinguished these two, without being able to decide between them; but at the same time deprecated any mention of himself on account of the trifling value of his gift. Whereupon Irving adds, with quaint antique solemnity, that "it was not the worth but the honour which should be regarded: that the conquerors of Greece and Rome reckoned themselves more honoured by the laurel crown than if they had enjoyed the splendid pomp of the noblest triumph;" and concludes by sending the book to both, so that "by making the present mutual, it will not only be a testimonial of your progress, but also of that attachment which I hope will

ripen into cordial friendship; and which it is the more pleasant to observe as its place is too often occupied by jealousy and envy."

He was not always, however, so exemplary in his letter-writing. Only next spring, a year after, one of the ladies to whom, in conjunction with her companion, the above faultless sentiments were inscribed, seems to have ceased to be Irving's "much-respected pupil." The hyperbolical fiend which talks of nothing but ladies, seems in full possession of the young man in the next glimpse we obtain of him; which is contained in a letter to his friend Mr. Story, who had apparently met with some temporary obstruction in his career, and whom Irving felt himself called upon to console. He fulfils this friendly office in the following fashion, beginning with sundry philosophical but far from original arguments against despondency:—

"But all these having doubtless occurred to yourself, I proceed to operate upon your feelings, by the much-approved method of awakening your sympathy to the much keener sufferings of your humble servant and correspondent. You must, then, understand that in this town or neighbourhood dwells a fair damsel, whose claims to esteem I am prepared, at the point of my pen, to vindicate against *all deadly*. Were I to enter into an enumeration of those charms which challenge the world, I might find the low, equal, and unrhyming lines of prose too feeble a vehicle to support my flights. . . . I got to know that this peerless one was prevented from making a promised visit into the country by a stormy Saturday. I took the earliest opportunity on the next lawful * day of waiting on her, and hinting, when mamma's ear was

* A common Scotch expression for *week* days, excluding the Sunday; public conveyances used to be advertised as plying "on all lawful days."

engaged, that I had business at the same village some of these evenings, and would be most ineffably blessed to be her protector home, if not also abroad: would she consent? I might ask her mother. In this most disagreeable of all tasks I succeeded better than I expected. But, alas! after I thought everything was in a fair way for yielding me an half-hour's enjoyment, I was not till then informed that another was to be of the party. This was a terrible obstacle, and how to get the better of it I could not divine. . . . I could do nothing the whole afternoon but think how happy I might be in the evening. Left home about seven o'clock, so as to call on a friend and be ready at eight, the appointed hour. 'Twas a most lovely, still evening; just such as you could have chosen from the whole year for the sighs, protestations, invocations, &c. of lovers. I called on my friend and tried to get him along with me, in order that I might throw on his charge the intruder, if she should happen to be there. It would not do, and I was forced to go alone, resolving to make the best of a bad business should I be so unfortunate. What, think you, was my disappointment—what imagination can figure—what language describe my torment when I found, she was gone some time ago? What could I do? The sea was at hand, but then the tide was not full; there were rocks at hand, but they were scarcely elevated enough for a lover's leap. I took my solitary, gloomy way down by the dark shore. I lingered long beneath the gloom of a ruined castle that overhangs the billow. I listened to the dash of the waves, and cast my melancholy eye to the solitary beacon gleaming from afar. I fancied, fantastically enough, that it was an image of myself separated and driven to a distance from what in the world I valued. At last, however, my tardy feet, after scrambling on many a ledgy rock, and splashing in many a pool, brought me to the haunts of men. . . . where there were few stirring to disturb the repose of my silent thoughts; I stole home and endeavoured to find oblivion of my cares in the arms of sleep. . . . Since that time the unfortunate subject of the above tragic incident has consigned every serious study to neglect."

This whimsical effusion concludes with a significant

note: "Have you got introduced to Miss P. or Miss D. yet? If you be, present my kind compliments. *But at your peril mention a word of the lady to whom I have referred as honouring this part of the world with her presence!*"

Out of the serio-comic levity of this beginning, however, sprang important conclusions. Though it was only after a distance of long years and much separation, the usual vicissitudes of youthful life, and all the lingering delays of a classical probation, that the engagement was completed, Irving found his mate in Fifeshire. Not long after she had ceased to be his pupil he became engaged to Isabella Martin, the eldest daughter of the parish minister of Kirkcaldy. She was of a clerical race, an hereditary "daughter of the Manse," according to the affectionate popular designation, and of a name already in some degree known to fame in the person of Dr. Martin, of Monimail, her grandfather, who survived long enough to baptize and bless his great-grandchildren — who had some local poetical reputation in his day, and whom the grateful painter, entitled in Scotland "our immortal Wilkie," has commemorated as having helped his early struggles into fame by the valuable gift of two lay figures: and of David Martin, his brother, first proprietor of the said lay figures, whose admirable portraits are well known. Her father, the Rev. John Martin, was an admirable type of the class to which he belonged — an irreproachable parish priest, of respectable learning and talents and deep piety, living a domestic patriarchal life in the midst of the little community under his charge, fully subject to their observation and criticism,

but without any rival in his position or influence; bringing up his many children among them, and spending his active days in all that fatherly close supervision of morals and manners which distinguished and became the old hereditary ministers of Scotland. He was of the party then called "wild" or "high-flyers," in opposition to the "Moderates," who formed the majority of the Church, and whose flight was certainly low enough to put them in little hazard from any skyey influences. Such a man in those days exercised over the bulk of his people an influence which, perhaps, no man in any position exercises now —and in which the special regard of the really religious portion of his flock only put a more fervent climax upon the traditionary respect of the universal people, always ready, when he was worthy of it, to yield to the traditionary sway of the minister, though equally ready to jeer at and scorn him when he was not, with a contempt increased by their national appreciation of the importance of his office. To the house of this good man Irving had early obtained access, the Manse children in a goodly number being among his scholars, and the Manse itself forming the natural centre of all stray professors of literature in a region which had too many sloops and looms on hand to be greatly attracted that way. The family in this Manse of Kirkcaldy, which afterwards became so closely related to him, and the younger members of which understood him all the better that their minds had been formed and developed under his instruction, were, during all his after life, Irving's fast friends, accompanying him, not with concurrence or agreement

certainly, but with faithful affection and kindness to the very edge of the grave. Irving himself, in one of his somewhat formal early letters, gives us a pleasant, if slightly elaborate glimpse of this domestic circle. He is writing to one of its absent daughters, and apologizing "for not having expressed sooner the higher regard which I have for you."

"But," he proceeds, "I sometimes find for myself an excuse in thinking that almost the whole of that leisure of which you were so well entitled to a share, has been engrossed in that family circle of which you were wont to form a part, and with which your warmest sympathies will for a long time, perhaps for ever, dwell. They are well, and living in that harmony and happiness which Providence, as it must approve, will not, I pray, soon disturb. Your brothers and sisters, as formerly, have gone on securing the esteem of their teachers, delighting the hearts of your worthy parents with placid joy, and laying up for themselves a fund of useful knowledge, of warm and virtuous feelings, and of pleasing recollections, which will go far to smooth for them the rugged features of life. God grant that they and you may continue to merit all the good that I for one do wish you, and that you may receive all that you merit. By me it shall ever be esteemed amongst the most fortunate events of my life to have been brought to the acquaintance of your father and his family; and I trust that the intimacy which they have honoured me with, shall one day ripen into a closer connection."

Then follow some counsels to the young lady on her studies (particularly recommending the acquirement of "a correct English accent and pronunciation"), which must have been of rather an ambitious kind.

"Last night we had a talk at the Manse over a clause in your last letter about your Greek pursuits; and we have arranged to send you by the first opportunity a copy of

Moor's Grammar and Dunbar's Exercises, which, with the Greek Testament, will withstand your most diligent efforts for at least one year. You are not far from Cambridge; you ought to possess yourself of a complete set of the Cambridge course (Wood and Vine's), and study them regularly; at the same time, be cautious of losing, in the superior convenience and readiness of the analytical or algebraical method, the simple and elegant spirit of the ancient Geometry, to which Leslie's elements, especially the Analysis, is so good an introduction. I would like to have a correspondence with you on scientific subjects. . . . . The news of the burgh I entrust to those who know them better. The people wear the same faces as when you left; and their manners seem nearly as stationary. I leave the remainder of my paper to Isabel. I cannot *claim*, but do hope for a letter soon. When it comes, it shall be to me like a holiday."

The lady addressed in this strain of old-fashioned regard and kindness was one with whom, in after life, he had much intercourse, and who was not only a sister, but a friend capable of appreciating his character. Years after, he expresses, with a certain *naïve* frankness quite his own, his hopes that a dear friend about to return to Scotland, and whom he had earnestly advised to marry, should be "directed by the Lord to one of those sisters who are in my mind always represented as one." Irving's prayer was granted. The warm-hearted and admirable William Hamilton*, the friend

* William Hamilton, a merchant in Cheapside, and, like Irving, a native of Dumfriesshire, was one of the early office-bearers in the Caledonian Chapel, Hatton Garden; a man who, in the inglorious but profitable toils of business, concealed from the world an amount of practical sagacity, unpurchasable, unacquirable endowment, which might have honoured a higher place, and whose warm heart and benign manners are remembered by many in his own sphere, where no man possessed a more entire popularity. He had a share in originating the "call" from the scanty Scotch congregation, all unaware of what that call of theirs was to bring about, who brought

of his choice and faithful counsellor to the end, became his brother-in-law; and to the sister thus brought into his immediate neighbourhood some of his most touching confidences were afterwards addressed.

He had now completed his necessary tale of collegiate sessions, having been, in the partial and irregular way necessitated by his other occupations, in attendance at the Divinity Hall for six long winters. He was now subjected to the "trials for license," which Presbyterian precautions require. "They are now taken to severest trials by the Presbytery of the Church in those bounds where they reside," he himself describes with loving boastfulness, proud of the severities of the Church from which he never could separate his heart,—"and circular letters are sent to all the presbyters in that district, in order that objections may be taken against him who would have the honour, and take upon himself the trust, of preaching Christ. If no objections are offered, they proceed to make trial of his attainments in all things necessary for the ministry; his knowledge, his piety, his learning, and his character. They prescribe to him five several discourses; one an 'Ecce Jesum,' in Latin, to discover his knowledge in that language; another an exercise in Greek criticism, to discover his knowledge in sacred literature; another a homily; another a discourse to the clergy, to know his gifts in expounding the Scriptures; another a sermon to know his gifts in preaching to the people. These

Irving to London; was his close and affectionate coadjutor for many years; and not being able at last to follow so far as his beloved friend would have led him, stood silently and sorrowfully by to witness that disruption and separation which he could not avert.

trials last half a year; and being found sufficient, he is permitted to preach the Gospel among the churches. But he is not yet ordained, for our Church ordaineth no man without a flock."

It is thus that Irving, when at the height of his fame, and opening the great new church built for him in London, affectionately vaunts the carefulness of his ecclesiastical mother. He went through his "trials" in the early part of the year 1815, and was fully licensed to preach the Gospel by the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy in the June of that year; and "exercised his gift," according to the old Scotch expression, thereafter in Kirkcaldy, and other places, with no great amount of popular appreciation. A humorous description of his first sermon, preached in Annan, is given by an early friend. The "haill toun," profoundly critical and much interested, turned out to hear him; even his ancient teachers, with solemn brows, came out to sit in judgment on Edward's sermon. A certain excitement of interest, unusual to that humdrum atmosphere, thrilled through the building. When the sermon was in full current, some incautious movement of the young preacher tilted aside the great Bible, and the sermon itself, that direful "paper" which Scotch congregations hold in high despite, dropped out bodily, and fluttered down upon the precentor's desk underneath. A perfect rustle of excitement ran through the church; here was an unhoped-for crisis!—what would the neophyte do now? The young preacher calmly stooped his great figure over the pulpit, grasped the manuscript as it lay, broadways, crushed it up in his great hand, thrust it into a pocket, and went on as fluently as before. There does not exist

a congregation in Scotland which that act would not have taken by storm. His success was triumphant. To criticise a man so visibly independent of "the paper" would have been presumption indeed.

In Kirkcaldy, however, his appearances neither excited such interest, nor were attended by any such fortunate accidents. The people listened doubtfully to those thunder-strains which echoed over their heads, and which were certainly not like Dr. Martin's sermons. They could not tell what to make of discourses so strangely different from the discourses of other orthodox young probationers, and doubtless the style was still unformed, and had not yet attained that rhythm and music which would not have passed unnoticed even in Kirkcaldy; yet the common complaint alleged against it was perfectly characteristic. "He had ower muckle gran'ner," the good people said, with disturbed looks. Too much grandeur! most true, but most singular of criticisms! A certain baker, Beveridge by name (let us hand it down to such immortality as can be conferred by this record), rudely, with Scotch irreverence for the place in which he was, kicked his pew-door open and bounced forth out of the church, when the lofty head of the young schoolmaster was seen in the pulpit; and the same church, which a few years after was disastrously crowded, with hearers coming far and near at the name of the great preacher, thinned out of its ordinary attendance in those early days when he was to supply Dr. Martin's place. He got no credit and little encouragement in what was, after all, his real vocation. The fervent beginnings of his eloquence were thrown back cold upon his heart; no eye in his audience

making response to that imperfect splendid voice of half-developed genius, which was so wonderfully distinct from the common-place shrills of ordinary pulpit declamation, which they listened to and relished. He had "ower muckle gran'ner" for the good people of Kirkcaldy. His chaotic splendours disconcerted them; and no doubt there was a certain justice in the general voice. A style so rich and splendid might very well have sounded turgid or bombastic in youth, before the harmonious keynote had been found.

He lingered three years after his license as a preacher, in his schoolmaster's desk; silent, listening to other preachers, not always with much edification; noting how the people to whom his own "unacceptableness" was apparent, relished the platitudes of meaner men: laying in unconsciously a certain scorn and intolerance of those limited pretenders to wisdom, whose sham or borrowed coin had fuller currency than his own virgin gold; and as he sat in a position from which he could at once watch the pulpit and the audience, with thoughts on this momentous and often-discussed subject taking gradual form in his mind, he asked himself the reasons of his own apparent failure. He asked himself a still deeper question, whether this was the preaching of Paul and his brother apostles? This process of thought is apparent throughout all his works, and above all in the *Orations* with which he first burst upon the world. Those three years of slow successive Sundays, now and then interrupted by an occasional appearance in the pulpit hailed by no gracious looks, gave the silent listener, whose vocation it was to preach, deep insight into, and

deeper impatience of, the common conventionalities of the pulpit. He found out how little the sermons he heard touched his case: to his own mind he represented himself, all glowing with genius and eagerness, as a representative of the educated hearer, and chafed, as many a man has chafed since, over the dead platitudes which were only a weariness. It is probable that this compulsory pause, irksome as it may have been, was of the profoundest importance both to Irving and to his future eloquence. It delivered him entirely from the snare of self-admiration, so far as his pulpit efforts were concerned, and concentrated his powers on the perfection of his style and utterance; while it gave at once to his Christian zeal and human ambition the sharpest of all spurs—the keen stimulus of seeing other men do that work badly or slothfully, which he felt it was in him to do well. The peculiar position of a Scotch probationer, on the very threshold of the Church, but not within it; a preacher, but still only a layman, with the title of reverend sometimes accorded to him by courtesy, but entirely without ecclesiastical position, gave him all the greater facility for forming a judgment upon the inadequacies of the ordinary pulpit. Such speculations were not common in those days. People who acknowledged the influence of the Church, considered themselves bound, for reasons both religious and political, to maintain it in all points, and suffer no assault; while those who did not, held it in entire contempt, as an unimprovable institution. The Kirkcaldy probationer belonged to neither of these classes. He saw with an ideal eye, which went as yet far beyond his powers of execution, what that pulpit could do and

ought to do. He was by far too bold and candid, and too thoroughly assured of the truth he held, to be afraid of attracting notice to its imperfections; on the contrary, it chafed his very soul to permit it to be supposed that religion and religious teaching were for the vulgar only, and that what satisfied baker Beveridge was to be considered sufficient for the world; and while he was silent his heart burned. With a temperament such as his, loving love and approbation, as it was natural for him to do, and believing in the sincerity of all men, no other discipline could have been half so effective. He learned, if not to distrust himself, at least to admit, with a certain sorrowful but candid astonishment, that the world in general did not take a lofty view of his qualifications; and he paused over it, weighing that and its causes in his heart with manful humility and surprise—meaning to be at the bottom of this ere all was done; feeling in his heart that it was only for a time.

During this period of his life, his personal religious sentiments are not very apparent, nor is there any record, so far as I have been able to ascertain, of such a critical moment in his life as those which have formed the turning point of so many minds. He was spotless in manners and morals at all times; but not without faults of temper; and was specially distinguished by a certain cheerful, cordial pugnacity, and readiness, when occasion called for it, to adopt a boldly offensive line of tactics in support of his own dignity and independence, or those of his class; partly stimulated thereto, doubtless, by the great personal strength which could no more consent to remain inactive than any other of his gifts. In one of his many walking excur-

sions, for example, he and his companion came to a little roadside inn, where there was but one sitting-room, of a very homely description. The young men left their coats and knapsacks in this room, ordered dinner, and went out to investigate the neighbourhood while it was getting ready. On their return, however, they found the room occupied by a party of tourists, the only table filled, their dinner forestalled, and their belongings huddled into a corner. Remonstrances were unavailing; the intruders not only insisted that they had a right to retain possession of the room, but resisted the entrance of the hungry and tired pedestrians, and would neither share the table nor the apartment. When fair means were no longer practicable, Irving pushed forward to the window, and threw it wide open; then, turning towards the company, all ready for action, gravely addressed his comrade:—"Will you toss out or knock down?"—a business-like inquiry, which, according to the story, changed with great rapidity the aspect of affairs. Other anecdotes not unsimilar might be quoted. "In the year 1816," says Dr. Grierson, "the 42nd Regiment, having returned after Waterloo, was employed to line the streets of Edinburgh on the day when, at the opening of the General Assembly, the Royal Commissioner proceeded in state from the reception hall in Hunter Square, to St. Giles's. Standing in front of the Grenadier Company, Irving said to me, pointing to the tallest man among them, 'Do you see that fellow? I should like to meet him in a dark entry.' 'For what reason?' I inquired. 'Just,' said he, 'that I might find out what amount of drubbing I could bear!'"

The meeting of Assembly here referred to was enli-

vened by a momentary specimen of the young man's muscular power. It is impossible, out of Scotland, to form any idea of what was then the interest excited by the General Assembly, which had been for centuries the national parliament of exclusive Scottish principles and feelings. The late Lord Cockburn in his *Memorials*, as well as in his life of Lord Jeffrey, has reproduced, in slight but graphic sketches, the characteristic aspect of that unique ecclesiastical body. Scotch churchmen may naturally enough object to the friendly but not reverential description of the brilliant lawyer; but it is almost the only popular picture of the most national of all Scotch institutions which can be referred to. Matters are altered now-a-days; the unity is broken; and, however interesting the annual meetings of the Scotch Churches may be, there are now two of them, both of which are incomplete, and neither of which has a full title to be called national. At the period of which we are now speaking, there was scarcely any dissent in the country; the body of the nation held tenaciously by the Kirk, laymen of the highest class shared in its deliberations, and the most distinguished lawyers of the Scotch bar pleaded in its judicial courts. A great discussion in the Assembly was as interesting to Edinburgh as a great debate in Parliament would be in London to-day; and the interest, and even excitement, which attended this yearly Convocation, had taken a stimulus from the growing stir of external life, and from the still more important growth of existence within. The time was critical for every existing institution. The Church, long dormant, was, like other organisations, beginning to thrill with a new force, against which all

the slumbrous past arrayed itself; and the Scotch metropolis was stirred with universal emotion to see the new act of that world-long drama which is renewed from age to age in every church and country; that struggle in which, once in a century at least, indifference and common usage are brought to bay by the new life rising against them, and, roused at last, fight for their sluggish existence with such powers as they are able to muster. At such a moment occurred the famous "Debate on Pluralities," which holds an important place in the modern history of the Scotch Church—a debate in which "Chalmers of Kilmany," not long before zealously ambitious to hold such pluralities in his own person, but who had since gone through that mysterious and wonderful change in his views, which, when clearly honest and undoubted, no human audience can refuse to be interested in, was to lead the attack. The pluralities in question were such as might awaken the smiles of the richer establishment on the other side of the Tweed, where the word bears a more important meaning. The widest extent of pluralities possible to a Scotch clergyman was that of holding a professor's chair in conjunction with his pulpit and parochial duties. This question, which at the time, from the parties and principle involved, interested everybody, had naturally a double interest for the future ministers of the Church. The probationers and students of divinity were eager to gain admittance. The Assembly sat in a portion of St. Giles's, known by the name of the Old Assemby Aisle, one of the quaint sub-divisions into which that church, like Glasgow Cathedral in former days, has been partitioned for congregational use and

convenience, and where the narrow pews and deep steep galleries, thrust in between the lofty pillars, are as much out of keeping with those pillars themselves as is the white-washed blank of wall, despoiled of its tombs and altars, under the calm height of the vault above. "The Old Assembly Aisle," says the gentleman already quoted, "afforded but very limited accommodation, and the students' gallery was understood to be occupied by some persons not of their body. At this Irving felt great indignation. He remonstrated with the door-keeper, but in vain; he demanded entrance for himself and others who were excluded; and when no attention was, or perhaps could be, paid by that official, he put his shoulder to the narrow door, and, applying his Herculean strength to it, fairly wrenched it off its hinges! The crash interrupted the proceedings of the court, and produced both surprise and diversion, but no redress of grievances."

A somewhat unscrupulous mode of entering a church, it must be allowed. Such incidents as these—and they might easily be multiplied—display, in perhaps its least objectionable form, that of downright personal force and resistance, the national characteristic intolerance of circumstances, and determination to subdue all outside obstacles to its will, which shows so strongly in the youthful development of Scotchmen; a quality little recognised, but most influential, and which has largely affected the recent history of the Scotch Church. Nobody can read the life of Chalmers, manful and often splendid as that life is, without a perception of this determined wilfulness, and disinclination to yield to circumstances. If the same tendency is not so

apparent in the Jeffreys, Cockburns, and Tytlers of another class, it is probably because the somewhat higher social sphere of the latter had tempered the sharpness of their nationality. Irving's personal strength and relish for its exercise threw into amusing outward exhibitions of force a quality which, though always picturesque and characteristic, is not always amiable.

As the time of his probation lengthened out, it is probable that Irving, with all his inclinations rising towards the profession which the Church had now solemnly sanctioned his choice of, and pronounced him capable for, became very weary of his schoolmaster life. Another school, in opposition to his, was set up in the town, not apparently from any distaste towards him, but from the advancing desire for liberal education which his own long apprenticeship in Kirkcaldy must have fostered; a school which — singular luck for the little Fife seaport — secured the early services of Thomas Carlyle. Changes too, and attempts at widening out his limited possibilities, appear in his own life. To increase the profits of his post — which however of themselves appear to have been considerable, as such matters go,—Irving made an attempt to receive private pupils, who were to attend his school and live under his own charge. For this purpose, he took up his abode in the Abbotshall schoolhouse, at one extremity of the town of Kirkcaldy, but in another parish, the parish schoolmaster of which was, like himself, a candidate for the Church. The house was the upper flat of the building occupied as a school, and was more commodious than the majority of schoolmasters' houses. A nobler Marina could not be than the broad terrace

overlooking the Firth, but totally unappropriated to any uses of fashion or visitors, upon which stands the schoolhouse of Abbotshall, beholding from its range of windows a wide landscape, always interesting, and often splendid, the Firth with all its islands, the distant spires and heights of Edinburgh, and the green Lothian coast with its bays and hills. Whether the pupils were slow to come, or the conjoint household did not answer, or Irving himself tired of the experiment, does not appear; but it was soon given up, and does not seem to have had any success. "Ay, Mr. Irving once lived here—he was a great mathematician;" says the present incumbent, complacent among his gooseberry bushes; spoken in that sunny garden, such words throw back and set aside the years which have made little change on anything but man. One forgets how his sun rose to noon, and at noon disastrously went down, carrying with it a world of hopes; a mist of distance conceals the brilliant interval between this homely house and the Glasgow Cathedral crypt. Here, where once he lived, it is not the great preacher, the prophet and wonder of an age, whose shadow lingers on the kindly soil. He was master of Kirkcaldy Academy in those days. He was "a great mathematician"; the glory of an after career, foreign to the schoolroom, has not rubbed out that impression from the mind of his humble successor on the spot where as yet he had no other fame.

CHAPTER V.

AFLOAT ON THE WORLD.

In 1818, when he had been seven years in Kirkcaldy, and had now reached the maturity of his twenty-sixth year, Irving finally left his school and gave up teaching. The position seems to have been growing irksome to him for some time before. It was not his profession; and he was wasting the early summer of his life in work which, however cordially he embraced it, was not the best work for such a man. His assistants too, on whom as the school increased he had to depend, brought him into other complications; and he was now no longer a youth lingering at the beginning of his career, but a man eager to enter the arena where so many others less worthy were contending for the prize; and not only so, but a man engaged to be married, to whom nature indicated the necessity of fixing himself permanently in life. Moved by the rising excitement of all these thoughts, and apparently not without means of maintaining himself for some time, while he saw what work the world might have for him to do, he finally gave up the Kirkcaldy academy in the summer of 1818, and resolving henceforward to devote himself to his own profession alone, came to Edinburgh, where he took lodgings in Bristo Street, a

locality still frequented by students. Here he was near the College, and in the centre of all that mental activity from which he had been separated in the drowsy retirement of the country town. He entered largely and gladly into all academical pursuits. He renewed his acquaintance with friends who had been with him in his early college days; or whom he had met in his hurried visits to Edinburgh, while lingering through his tedious "partial" sessions in the Divinity Hall; and seems to have heartily set to work to increase his own attainments, and make himself better qualified for whatever post he might be called to. It is not a brilliant period in the young man's life. He presents himself to us in the aspect of an unsuccessful probationer, a figure never rare in Scotland; a man upon whom no sunshine of patronage shone, and whom just as little had the popular eye found out or fixed upon; whose services were unsolicited either by friendly ministers or vacant congregations — a man fully licensed and qualified to preach, whom nobody cared to hear. With the conviction strong in his mind that this was his appointed function in the world, and with a consciousness of having pondered the whole matter much more deeply than is usual with young preachers, there rose before Irving the immovable barrier of unsuccess;— not failure; he had never found means to try his powers sufficiently for failure — even that might have been less hard to bear than the blank of indifference and "unacceptability" which he had now to endure. His services were not required in the world; the profession for which, by the labours of so many years, he had slowly qualified himself, hung

in his hands, an idle capability of which nothing came. Yet the pause at first seems to have been grateful. He had nothing to do — but at all events he had escaped from long toiling at a trade which was not his.

Accordingly, he attended several classes in the College during the winter of 1818–19; among which were Chemistry and Natural History. "He prosecuted these studies," says a fellow-student, "at least in some of their branches, with great delight;" although in a note written at this period to Mr. Gordon, afterwards Dr. Gordon of Edinburgh, he confesses, while mentioning that he had been studying mineralogy, "that he had learned from it as little about the structure of the earth as he could have learned about the blessed Gospel by examining the book of kittle* Chronicles!" He was also much occupied with the modern languages; French and Italian especially. These were before the days of Teutonic enthusiasm; but Irving seems to have had a pleasure in, and faculty for, acquiring languages, as was testified by his rapid acquirement of Spanish at an after period of his life. Some of the few letters which throw any light on this period are occupied with discussions about dictionaries and grammars, and the different prices of the same — which show him deep in the pursuit of Italian, and at the same time acting as general agent and ready undertaker of country commissions. One of these, addressed to one of his pupils in the manse of Kirkcaldy, conveys, after reporting his diligence in respect to sundry of such commissions, the following advice:—

"Let me entreat you to pursue your own improve-

* Difficult, puzzling.

ment sedulously, both religious and intellectual. Read some of the Latin and Italian classics, with a view to the higher accomplishments of taste and sentiment, directing all your studies by the principle of fitting your mind still more and more for perceiving the beauties and excellences God has spread over the existence of man."

Such a motive for studies of this description has novelty in it, though it is one that we are well enough accustomed to see applied to all those educational preparations of science with which our schools abound. While he thus occupied himself in completing an education which throughout must have been more a gradual process of improving and furnishing the mind than of systematic study, Irving had also engaged warmly in all the recognised auxiliaries of university training. He had been in the habit for years before of occasionally attending the meetings of one of the literary societies of the College, the Philomathic, and taking a considerable share in its proceedings. "He was sometimes very keen and powerful in debate," says Dr. Grierson, "and without being unfair or overbearing, was occasionally in danger, by the vehemence of his manner and the strong language he employed, of being misunderstood and giving offence." But on coming to Edinburgh in 1818, he found this society, now defunct, too juvenile for his maturer age and thoughts; and was instrumental in instituting another of riper pretensions, intended "for the mutual improvement of those who had already completed the ordinary academic course." This was called the Philosophical Association, and consisted only of seven or eight members; of whom

Edward Irving was one and Thomas Carlyle another. Some teachers of local eminence and licentiates of the Church made up the number. The vast disproportion which exists now between these immortals and the nameless, but in their own sphere not undistinguished, men who surrounded them, was not apparent in those days; and probably the lesser men were at no such disadvantage in their argumentations as one would imagine at the first glance. The first essay delivered by Irving in this society was "somewhat unexpectedly," his old companion says, on the subject of *Bible Societies*, and "was full of thought, ardour, and eloquence, indicating large views and a mind prepared for high and holy enterprise." It would be curious to know what he had to say on a subject which afterwards caused so much commotion, and on which some of his own most characteristic appearances were made. But the Philosophical Association is also defunct; other generations have formed other societies of their own, and the early sentiments of Irving and Carlyle are as entirely lost as are those of their less distinguished colleagues.

In the reviving glow of intellectual life, his long pondering upon the uses of the pulpit came to a distinct issue. He announced his intention of burning all his existing sermons, and beginning on a new system: an intention which was remorselessly carried out. Those prelections which the youth had delivered from year to year in the Divinity Hall, and those discourses which the Kirkcaldy parishioners had despised, and Beveridge the baker had boldly escaped from hearing, were sacrificed in this true *auto-da-fé*. No doubt it was a fit and wise holocaust. Sacrificing all his

youthful conventionalities and speculations, Irving, at six-and-twenty, began to compose what he was to address to such imaginary hearers as he himself had been in Kirkcaldy church. The wonderful fame which flashed upon him whenever he stood forth single before the world, takes a certain explanation even beyond the perennial explanation of all wonders which lies in genius, from this fact. For the four silent years during which he had possessed the right to speak, other people had been addressing him out of Dr. Martin's pulpit; all the ordinary round of argument and exhortation had been tried in unconscious experiment upon the soul of the great preacher, who sat silent, chafing yet weighing them all in his heart. He knew where they failed, and how they failed, far more distinctly than reason or even imagination could have taught him. Their tedium, their ineffectiveness, their wasted power and superficial feeling, told all the more strongly upon him because of his consciousness that the place thus occupied was his own fit place, and that he himself had actually something to say; and when the schoolmaster's daily duties were over, and he had time and leisure to turn towards his own full equipment, the result was such as I have just described. Warmed and stimulated by his own experience, he began to write sermons to himself—that impatient, vehement hearer, whose character and intelligence none of the other preachers had studied. Perhaps, in the midst of all the modern outcry against sermons, the preachers of the world might adopt Irving's method with advantage. While he wrote he had always in his eye that brilliant, dissatisfied, restless listener, among the side pews in Kirkcaldy church.

He knew to a hair's-breadth what that impatient individual wanted,—how much he could bear—how he could be interested, edified, or disgusted. I have no doubt it was one of the greatest secrets of his after power; and that the sweet breath of popular applause, pleasant though it might have been, would have injured the genius which, in silence, and unacceptableness, and dire prolonged experiment of other people's preaching, came to be its own perennial hearer—the first and deepest critic of its own powers.

One of the first occasions when he preached on this new system, Dr. Grierson adds, "He was engaged to supply the pulpit of his old professor of divinity (Dr. Ritchie), when, in his noble and impassioned zeal for the supreme and infallible standard of Scripture, he startled his audience by a somewhat unqualified condemnation of ecclesiastical formulas, although he still unquestionably maintained, as he had conscientiously subscribed, all the doctrines of our orthodox Confession of Faith." "He was very fearless, original, striking, and solemn," continues the same authority, "in many of his statements, illustrations, and appeals." Though he is described, and indeed afterwards describes himself, as still "feeling his way' in respect to some matters of religious truth, doubt does not seem ever to have invaded his mind. At no period is there any appearance of either scepticism or uncertainty. While his mind took exception at the manner in which the truth was set forth, there is no trace in his life of that period of uncertain or negative belief—that agony of conflict, which has come, falsely or truly, to be looked upon as one of the inevitable phenomena of spiritual life in every independent mind.

The heroic simplicity of Irving's character seems to have rejected that vain contest among the incomprehensibles with which so many young men begin their career. Even in the arbitrary, reasoning, unreasonable days of youth, logic was not the god of the young man, who never could disjoin his head from his heart, nor dissolve the absolute unity of nature in which God had made him; and he seems to have come through all the perils of his time—a time in which scepticism, if less refined, was by a great deal franker, honester, and more outspoken than now—with a heart untouched; and to have entirely escaped what was then called Free-thinking. Whether his personal piety originated in any visible crisis of conversion it is impossible to tell. There is no trace of it in his history, neither does he himself refer to any sudden light cast upon his life. "I was present once or twice about this period," Dr. Grierson tells us, "when he was asked to conduct family prayers. He was very slow, pointed, and emphatic, and gave one, as yet, more the idea of profound, earnest, and devout *thinking*, than of simple and fervent petitioning." But it is impossible to point to any portion of his life as that in which the spiritual touch was given which vivified all. His behaviour was at all times blameless, but never ascetical. "He associated with, and lived in the world, without restraint, joining the forms and fashions of mixed society," says an anonymous writer, supposed to be Allan Cunningham, who afterwards acknowledges, with an apologetic touch of horror, that his social habits went almost the length of vulgarity, since he was once in the habit of smoking when in the company of smokers!

But this seems the hardest thing that anyone has to say against him.

While in Edinburgh, and entering into all the modest pleasures of the little intellectual society above described, Irving met once more the little pupil whose precocious studies he had superintended at Haddington. He found her a beautiful and vivacious girl, with an affectionate recollection of her old master; and the young man found a natural charm in her society. I record this only for a most characteristic, momentary appearance which he makes in the memory of his pupil. It happened that he, with natural generosity, introduced some of his friends to the same hospitable house. But the generosity of the most liberal stops somewhere. When Irving heard the praises of one of those same friends falling too warmly from the young lady's lips, he could not conceal a little pique and mortification, which escaped in spite of him. When this little ebullition was over, the fair culprit turned to leave the room; but had scarcely passed the door when Irving hurried after her, and called, entreating her to return for a moment. When she came back, she found the simple-hearted giant standing penitent to make his confession. "The truth is I was piqued," said Irving; "I have always been accustomed to fancy that *I* stood highest in your good opinion, and I was jealous to hear you praise another man. I am sorry for what I said just now—that is the truth of it;"—and so, not pleased, but penitent and candid, let her go. It is a fair representation of his prevailing characteristic. He could no more have retained what he felt to be a meanness on

his mind unconfessed, than he could have persevered in the wrong.

With this humility, however, was conjoined, in the most natural and genial union, all that old pugnacity which had distinguished him in former times. Pretension excited his wrath wherever he saw it; and perhaps he was not so long-suffering as his gigantic uncle. A story of a similar description to some already quoted belongs to this period of his life. He had undertaken to escort some ladies to a public meeting, where it was necessary to be in early attendance at the door to obtain a place. Irving had taken up a position on the entrance steps with his charges under his wing, when an official personage came pushing his way through the crowd, and ordering the people to stand back. When no attention was paid to him this authoritative person put out his hand to thrust the Hercules beside him out of his way. Irving raised in his hand the great stick he carried, and turned to the intruder: "Be quiet, sir, or I will annihilate you!" said the mighty probationer. The composure with which this truculent sentence was delivered drew a burst of laughter from the crowd, which completed the discomfiture of the unfortunate functionary.

Thus the session—the few busy months of university labours—the long year of expectation and hope, passed over amid many occupations and solacements of friendship. But when the door was closed in the dun-coloured Bristo-street room, where nothing was to be seen from the windows but a dusty street, which might have flourished in any vulgar town in existence, and bore no trace of those enchantments of Edinburgh windows,

which make up for long stairs and steep ascents, the young man's prospects were not over-cheerful. He had put forth all his powers of mind and warnings of experience upon his sermons, but the result had not followed his expectation. He was still, after a year's interval, the same unemployed probationer that he had left Kirkcaldy; his money nearly about spent, most likely, and his cogitations not joyful. What he was to do was not clearly apparent. That he was not to be a teacher again seems distinct enough; but whether he was ever to be a preacher on Scottish soil was more than uncertain. When he had shut out the world which would not have him, the young man returned into his solitude, making up his mind with a grieved surprise, which is quite touching and grand in its unthought-of humility, that this gift of his, after all his labours, was still not the gift which was to prove effectual in his native country. He loved his country with a kind of worship, but still, if she would not have him, it was needful rather to carry what he could do elsewhere, than to lie idle, making no use of those faculties which had to be put to usury according to his Master's commandment. The countryman of Mungo Park and schoolfellow of Hugh Clapperton bethought himself:— In all the heathen world which hems Christendom about on every side, was there not room for a missionary according to the apostolic model,—a man without scrip or purse, entering in to whosoever would receive him, and passing on when he had said his message? A missionary, with Exeter Hall expectant behind him, and a due tale of conversions to render year after year, Irving never could have been; but in his despondency and discourage-

ment the youthful thought which had stirred him long ago, returned, as a kind of comfort and hopeful alternative, to his mind. He no longer cast stones into the pools, as he did with the Haddington school-boys, but he set about the zealous study of languages, in order to qualify himself for the kind of mission he purposed. To make his way through the continent, a religious wanderer totally unencumbered with worldly provisions, it was necessary to know the languages of the countries which he had to cross; and the idea refreshed him in the tedium of his long probation. When the arrival of summer dispersed his friends, Irving took refuge among his books, with thoughts of this knight-errantry and chivalrous enterprise swelling above the weariness of sickened hope. It was not the modern type of missionary, going, laden with civilisation and a printing press, to clear his little garden in the wilderness. It was the red-cross knight in that armour dinted with the impress of many battle-fields; it was the apostolic messenger, undaunted and solitary, bearing from place to place the gospel for which he could be content to die. The young man looked abroad on this prospect, and his heart rose. It comforted him when the glow of summer found him, country bred and country loving as he was, still shut up in the shabby world of Bristo-street. "Rejected by the living," he is recorded to have said, "I conversed with the dead." His eyes turned to the east, as was natural. He thought of Persia, it is said, where the Malcolms, his countrymen, from the same vigorous soil of Annandale, were making themselves illustrious. And with grammars and alphabets, with map and history, with the silent fathers of all literature standing by,

prepared himself for this old world demonstration of his allegiance and his faith.

Some letters which have lately come into my hands, and of the existence of which I was unaware at the time the above pages were written, lift the veil from this silent period of his life, and reveal, if not much of his loftier aspirations, at least all the hopeful uncertainty, the suspense, sometimes the depression, always the warm activity and expectations, naturally belonging to such a pause in the young man's existence. They are all addressed to the Martin family, who had done so much to brighten his life in Kirkcaldy; and show how his style in letter-writing begins to widen out of its youthful formality into ease and characteristic utterance. Ever exuberant in his expressions of obligation and gratitude, he writes to the kind mother of the Kirkcaldy manse as "her to whom, of matrons, I owe the most after her who gave me birth;" and warmly acknowledges that "the greater part of that which is soothing and agreeable in the experiences of my last six years is associated with your hospitable house and delightful family;" while, amid somewhat solemn compliments on the acquirements of that family, their former teacher joins special messages "to Andrew, with my request that each day he would read, as regularly as his Bible, some portion of a classical and of a French author; and to David, that he would not forget the many wise havers he and I have had together." In another letter to Mrs. Martin, the young man begs her acceptance, with many deprecations of the clumsy present, of a *bed*, which he describes as "the first article of furniture of which I was possessed," confessing that

"it is a cumbrous and inelegant memorial." "But let me dignify it what I can," he adds quaintly, "by the fervent prayer that while it appertains to your household it may always support a healthful body, and pillow a sound head, and shed its warmth over a warm and honest heart. After such a benediction you never can be unkind enough to refuse me." To Mr. Martin, Irving writes more gravely of his own affairs, discussing at length some projects for his future occupation, all of which culminate in the proposed travels on which he had set his heart, and which were to be commenced by study in Germany. The following letter opens a glimpse into that youthful world, all unaware of its own future, and thinking of terminations widely different from those which time has brought about, which will show how another career, as brilliant and longer than Irving's, took its beginning in the same cloudy regions of uncertainty and unsuccess:—

"Carlyle goes away to-morrow, and Brown the next day. So here I am once more on my own resources, except Dixon, who is [better] fitted to swell the enjoyment of a joyous than to cheer the solitude of a lonely hour. For this Carlyle is better fitted than any one I know. It is very odd, indeed, that he should be sent for want of employment to the country; of course, like every man of talent, he has gathered around this Patmos many a splendid purpose to be fulfilled, and much improvement to be wrought out. 'I have the ends of my thoughts to bring together, which no one can do in this thoughtless scene. I have my views of life to reform, and the whole plan of my conduct to new-model; and into all I have my health to recover. And then once more I shall venture my bark upon the waters of this wide realm, and if she cannot weather it, I shall steer west, and try the waters of another world.' So he reasons and resolves; but surely a

worthier destiny awaits him than voluntary exile. And for myself, here I am to remain until further orders — if from the east I am ready, if from the west I am ready, and if from the folk of Fife I am not the less ready. I do not think I shall go for the few weeks with Kinloch..... and I believe, after all, they are rather making their use of me than anything else, but I know not; and it is myself, not them, I have to *fend* for, both temporally and spiritually. God knows how ill I do it; but perhaps in His grace He may defend me till the arrival of a day more pregnant to me with hours of religious improvement.

"I had much more to say of the religious meetings I have been attending, and of the Burgher Synod, and of purposes of a literary kind I am conceiving, but lo! I am at an end with my paper and time, having just enough of both to commend me to the love of your household and to the fellowship of your prayers.

"Your most affectionate friend,

"EDWARD IRVING."

It was while in this condition, and with contending hopes and despairs in his mind, that Irving received a sudden invitation from Dr. Andrew Thomson, the minister of St. George's, to preach in his pulpit. It would be inconsistent with the loved principles of Presbyterian parity to distinguish even so eminent a man as Dr. Andrew Thomson as of the highest clerical rank in Edinburgh; but he really was so, in as far as noble talent, a brilliant and distinct character, and—not least important—a church in the most fashionable quarter, could make him. With the exception of Dr. Chalmers, he was perhaps the first man of his generation then in the Church of Scotland; so that the invitation itself was a compliment to the neglected probationer. But the request conveyed also an intimation that Dr. Chalmers was to be present, and that he

was then in search of an assistant in the splendid labours he was beginning in Glasgow. This invitation naturally changed the current of Irving's thoughts. It turned him back from his plans of apostolical wandering, as well as from the anxious efforts of his friends to procure pupils who might advance his interests, and placed before him the most desirable opening to his real profession which he could possibly light upon. That path which should lead him to his chosen work, at home, in the country of his kindred, his love, and his early affections, was dearer to him than even that austere martyr-path which it was in his heart to follow if need was. He went to St. George's with a new impulse of expectation, and preached, there can be little doubt, that one of his sermons which he thought most satisfactory. He describes this event to Mr. Martin as follows, with a frankness of youthful pleasure, and at the same time a little transparent assumption of indifference as to the result, in a letter dated the 2nd August, 1819 :—

"I preached Sunday week in St. George's before Andrew Thomson and Dr. Chalmers, with general, indeed, so far as I have heard, universal approbation. Andrew said for certain 'It was the production of no ordinary mind;' and how Dr. Chalmers expressed his approbation I do not know, for I never put myself about to learn these things, as you know. I am pleased with this, perhaps more so than I ought to be, if I were as spiritually-minded as I should be — but there is a reason for it. To you yet behind the curtain, *la voilà!* I believe it was a sort of pious and charitable plot to let Dr. C. hear me previous to his making inquiries about me as fit for his assistant. Whether he is making them now he *has* heard me, and where he is making them, I do not know. For though few people can fight the battle of preferment without pre-occupying the ground, &c., I would wish to be one

of that few. Full well I know it is impossible without His aid who has planned the field and who guides the weapons, more unerringly than Homer's Apollo, and inspirits the busy champions; and that I am not industrious in procuring. Oh, do you and all who wish me well, give me the only favour I ask,— the favour of your prayers."

The important moment, however, passed, and the young man returned unsatisfied to his lonely apartments. He waited there for some time in blank, discouraging silence; then concluded that nothing was to come of it, and that this once again his longing hope to find somebody who understood him and saw what he aimed at, was to be disappointed. This last failure seems to have given the intolerable touch to all his previous discouragements. He got up disgusted from that dull probation which showed him only how effectually all the gates of actual life and labour were barred against him. Even at that disconsolate moment he could still find time to write to his pupil and future sister-in-law about the Italian dictionary which he had undertaken to procure for her. Then he packed up his books and boxes, and sent them off to his father's house in Annan; but, probably desirous of some interval to prepare himself for that farewell which he intended, went himself to Greenock, meaning to travel from thence by some of the coasting vessels which called at the little ports on the Ayrshire and Galloway coast. Sick at heart, and buried in his own thoughts, he took the wrong boat, and was obliged to come ashore again. At that moment another steamer was in all the bustle of departure. Struck with a sudden caprice, as people often are in such a restless condition of mind

and feeling, Irving resolved, in his half desperation and momentary recklessness, to take the first which left the quay, and leaping listlessly into this, found it Irish, and bound for Belfast. The voyage was accomplished in safety, but not without an adventure at the end. Some notable crime had been perpetrated in Ireland about that time, the doer of which was still at large, filling the minds of the people with dreams of capture, and suspicions of every stranger. Of all the strangers entering that port of Belfast, perhaps there was no one so remarkable as this tall Scotchman, with his knapsack and slender belongings, his extraordinary powerful frame, and his total ignorance of the place, who was travelling without any feasible motive or object. The excited authorities found the circumstances so remarkable, that they laid suspicious hands upon the singular stranger, who was only freed from their surveillance by applying to the Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Mr. Hanna, who liberated his captive brother and took him home with Irish frankness. That visit was a jubilee for the children of the house. Black melancholy and disgust had fled before the breezes at sea, and the amusing but embarrassing *contretemps* on land; and Irving's heart, always open to children, expanded at once for the amusement of the children of that house. One of those boys was the Rev. Dr. Hanna of Edinburgh, the biographer, and son-in-law of Chalmers, who, at the distance of so many years, remembers the stories of the stranger thus suddenly brought to the fireside, and his genial, cordial presence which charmed the house.

After this the young man wandered over the north of

Ireland, as he had often wandered over the congenial districts of his own country, for some weeks; pursuing the system he had learned to adopt at home,—walking as the crow flies, finding lodging and shelter in the wayside cottages, sharing the potato and the milk which formed the peasant's meal. A singular journey; performed in primitive hardship, fatigue, and brotherly kindness; out of the reach of civilised persons or conventional necessities; undertaken out of pure caprice, the evident sudden impulse of letting things go as they would; and persevered in with something of the same *abandon* and determined abstraction of himself from all the disgusts and disappointments of life. Neither letters nor tokens of his existence seem to have come out of this temporary flight and banishment. He had escaped for the moment from those momentous questions which shortly must be faced and resolved. Presently it would be necessary to go back, to make the last preparations, to take the decisive steps, and say the farewells. He fairly ran away from it for a moment's breathing time, and took refuge in the rude unknown life of the Irish cabins;—a thing which most people have somehow done, or at least attempted to do, at the crisis of their lives.

When he re-emerged out of this refreshing blank, and came to the common world again, where letters and ordinary appeals of life were awaiting him, he found a bulky enclosure from his father, in the Coleraine post-office. Gavin Irving wrote, in explanation of his double letter (for postage was no trifle in those days), that he would have copied the enclosed if he could have read it; but not being able to make out a word, was com-

pelled to send it on for his son's own inspection. This enclosure was from Dr. Chalmers, inviting Irving to go to Glasgow; but the date was some weeks back, and the invitation was by no means distinct as to the object for which he was wanted. It was enough, however, to stir the reviving heart of the young giant, whom his fall, and contact with kindly mother earth, had refreshed and re-invigorated. He set out without loss of time for Glasgow, but only to find Dr. Chalmers absent, and once more to be plunged into the lingering pangs of suspense.

While waiting the Doctor's return, Irving again reported himself and his new expectations to his friends in Kirkcaldy.

"Glasgow, 1st September, 1819.

"You see I am once more in Scotland; and how I came to have found my way to the same place I started from, you shall now learn. On Friday last arrived at Coleraine a letter from Dr. Chalmers, pressing me to meet him in Edinburgh on the 30th, or in Glasgow the 31st Aug. So here I arrived, after a very tempestuous passage in the *Rob Roy;* and upon calling on the Doctor, I find he is still in Anstruther, at which place he proposes remaining awhile longer than he anticipated, and requests to have a few days of me there. So, but for another circumstance, you might have seen me posting through Kirkcaldy to Anster, the famed in song. That circumstance is Mrs. Chalmers's ill-health, of which he will be more particularly informed than he is at present by this post; and then Miss Pratt tells me there is no doubt he will return post-haste, as all good husbands ought. Here, then, I am, a very sorry sight, I can assure you. You may remember how disabled in my rigging I was in the Kingdom*; conceive

* The Kingdom of Fife, fondly so called by its affectionate population.

me, then, to have wandered a whole fortnight among the ragged sons of St. Patrick, to have scrambled about the Giant's Causeway, and crossed the Channel twice, and sailed in fish-boats and pleasure-boats, and driven gigs and jaunting-cars, and never once condescended to ask the aid of a tailor's needle. Think of this, and figure what I must be now. But I have just been ordering a refit from stem to stern, and shall by to-morrow be able to appear amongst the best of them; and you know the Glasgow bodies ken fu' weel it's merely impossible to carry about with ane a' the comforts of the Sa't Market at ane's tail, or a' the comforts of Bond Street either. I shall certainly now remain till I have seen and finally determined with Dr. Chalmers; for my time is so short that if I get home without a finale of one kind or other, it will interfere with the department of my foreign affairs, which imperiously call for attention."

The letter, which begins thus, is filled up, to the length of five long pages, by an account of the organisation of the Synod of Ulster, and of a case of discipline which had just occurred in it, on which, on behalf of a friend at Coleraine, the traveller was anxious to consult the experience of the minister of Kirkcaldy. In respect to his own prospects, Irving's suspense was now speedily terminated. Dr. Chalmers returned, and at once proposed to him to become his assistant in St. John's. The solace to the young man's discouraged mind must have been unspeakable. Here, at last, was one man who understood the unacceptable probationer, and perceived in him that faculty which he himself discerned dimly and still hoped in—troubled, but not convinced by the general disbelief. To have his gift recognised by another mind was new life to Irving; and such a mind! the generous intelligence of the first of Scotch preachers. But with Presbyterian scrupulosity, in the

midst of his eagerness, Irving hung back still. He could not submit to be "intruded upon" the people by the mere will of the incumbent, and would not receive even that grateful distinction, if he continued as distasteful as he had hitherto found himself. He was not confident of his prospects even when backed by the powerful encouragement of Dr. Chalmers. "I will preach to them if you think fit," he is reported to have said; "but if they bear with my preaching, they will be the first people who have borne with it!" In this spirit, with the unconscious humility of a child, sorry not to satisfy his judges, but confessing the failure which he scarcely could understand, he preached his first sermon to the fastidious congregation in St. John's. This was in October 1819. "He was generally well liked, but some people thought him rather flowery. However, they were satisfied that he must be a good preacher, since Dr. Chalmers had chosen him," says a contemporary witness. It was thus with little confidence on his own part, and somewhat careless indulgence on the part of the people, who were already in possession of the highest preaching of the time, that Irving opened his mouth at last, and began his natural career.

CHAPTER VI.

GLASGOW.

It was in October 1819, that Irving began his work in Glasgow—the first real work in his own profession which had opened to him. He was then in the full strength of early manhood, seven-and-twenty, the "Scottish uncelebrated Irving," whom his great countryman regretfully commemorates. His remarkable appearance seems, in the first place, to have impressed everybody. A lady, who was then a member of Dr. Chalmers's church, and who had access to the immediate circle surrounding him, tells how she herself, on one occasion, being particularly engaged in some domestic duties, had given orders to her servants not to admit any visitors. She was interrupted in her occupation, however, notwithstanding this order, by the entrance of one of her maids, in a state of high excitement and curiosity. "Mem!" burst forth the girl, "there 's a wonderful grand gentleman called; I couldna say you were engaged to *him*. I think he maun be a Highland Chief!"—"*That* Mr. Irving!" exclaimed another individual of less elevated and poetical conceptions—"*That* Dr. Chalmers's helper! I took him for a cavalry officer!" "Do you know, Doctor," said a third, addressing Chalmers himself, "what things people are

saying about your new assistant? They say he 's like a brigand chief." "Well, well," said Dr. Chalmers, with a smile, "whatever they say, they never think him like anything but a leader of men." Such was the impression he produced upon the little mercantile-ecclesiastical world of Glasgow. There, as everywhere, people were instinctively suspicious of this strange unconventional figure—did not know what to make of the natural grandeur about him—the lofty fashion of speech into which he had already fallen, and which seems to have been entirely appropriate to the garb and aspect in which nature had clothed him. But he found warm friends here, as everywhere, and by means of all his qualities, mental and bodily, his frankness and warmth, and habit of making himself the friend of the humblest individual he encountered, his splendid person and stately manners, took the hearts of the poor by storm. They are now dying out of those closes and wynds of Glasgow, who remember Irving as Dr. Chalmers's helper; but there still lingers here and there a recollection of that kindliest genial visitor. Chalmers himself, though a man of the warmest humanity, had at all times a certain abstract intentness about him, which must have altered the character of individual kindness as coming from his hands. His parishioners were to him emphatically his parishioners, the "body" (not vile, perhaps; but still more profoundly important for the experiment's sake than for its own) upon which one of the most magnificent of experiments was to be tried. But to Irving they were the Johns and Sandys, the Campbells and Macalisters,—the human neighbours who were of his personal acquaintance and individually interesting to himself.

Such a distinction makes itself known involuntarily. The position he held was one completely secondary and auxiliary, not even answering to that of a curate; for he was still only a probationer, unordained, without any rights in the Church except the license to preach, which was his sole qualification. He was not responsible for any part of the working of that huge machinery which Dr. Chalmers bore up on his Herculean shoulders, and which naturally collapsed when his mighty vital force was withdrawn. The "helper" went about more lightly, unburdened by social economy; and gained for himself among the poor people whom it was his daily work to visit, the place of an undoubted and much-prized friend.

Glasgow was at this period in a very disturbed and troublous condition. Want of work and want of food had wrought their natural social effect upon the industrious classes; and the eyes of the hungry weavers and cotton-spinners were turned with spasmodic anxiety to those wild political quack remedies, the inefficacy of which no amount of experience will ever make clear to people in similar circumstances. The entire country was in a dangerous mood; palpitating throughout with deep-seated complaint and grievance, to which the starving revolutionaries in such towns as Glasgow acted only as a kind of safety-valve, preventing a worse explosion. The discontent was drawing towards its climax when Irving received his appointment as assistant to the minister of St. John's. In such a large poor parish he encountered on all sides the mutterings of the popular storm. Chalmers, always liberal and statesmanlike, saw the real grievance, which finally

laboured and struggled, through the contest of years, into that full redress and establishment of popular rights, which seems to make any such crisis impossible now. But Irving's mind was of a different construction. He was one of those men of inconsistent politics, governed at once by prejudices and sympathies, whose "attitude" it is impossible to foretell; and of whom one can only predict that their political opinions will take the colour given by their heart; and that the side most strongly and feelingly set forth before them will undoubtedly carry the day. His nature was profoundly conservative; and yet the boldest innovation might have secured his devoted support, had it approved itself to his individual thoughts. His political opinions, indeed, seem to have been such as are common to literary men, artists, and women, entirely unconnected with politics, and who only now and then find themselves sufficiently interested to inform themselves upon public matters. Accordingly, he appears in after-life in strong opposition to every measure known as *liberal;* while in Glasgow, with those poor revolutionary weavers round him on every side, his heart convincing him of their miseries and despair, and his profound trust, not in human nature, but in the human creatures known to himself, persuading him that no harm could come from their hands, he stands perfectly calm and friendly amid the panic, disdaining to fear. That the crisis was an alarming one everybody allows. Nothing less than the horrors of the French revolution—battle and murder and sudden death—floated before the terror-stricken eyes of all who had anything to lose. Whig Jeffrey, a non-alarmist and (in moderation) friend of the people,

declares, solemnly, that "If the complaints of the people are repressed with insults and menaces — if no step is taken to relieve their distresses and redress their real and undeniable grievances — if the whole mass of their complaints, reasonable and unreasonable, are to be treated as seditious and audacious, and to meet with no other answer than preparations to put them down by force, then indeed we may soon have a civil war among us — and a civil war of a character far more deplorable and atrocious than was ever known in this land — a war of the rich against the poor; of the Government against the body of the people; of the soldiery against the great bulk of the labouring classes; — a war which can *never* be followed by any cordial or secure peace; and which must end, or rather begin, with the final and complete subversion of those liberties and that constitution which has hitherto been our pride, our treasure, and our support and consolation under all other calamities."

It was a conjunction of many troubles: foremost among which was that sharp touch of starvation, which makes men desperate; that Want—most pertinacious and maddest of all revolutionaries, who never fails to revenge bitterly the carelessness which lets him enter our well-defended doors,—he was there, wolfish and seditious, in Glasgow in the winter of 1819, plotting pikes and risings, with wild dreams of that legislation never yet found out, which is to make a paradise of earth; dreams and plots which were to blurt out, so far as Scotland was concerned, in the dismal little tragi-comedy of Bonnymuir some months later; and there be made a melancholy end of. But

while everybody else was prophesying horrors, it is thus that Irving, with tender domestic prefaces of kindness and congratulation, writes to his brother-in-law, Mr. Fergusson, a few months after his arrival in Glasgow. The immediate object of the letter is to congratulate his sister and her husband on the birth of their first-born. Referring to this event in the first place, he says :—

"You have now consigned to your care a more valuable article than the greatest Emperor, who is not a father, can boast of,—the care of an immortal who shall survive when this earth shall have removed without leaving a memorial, save in the memories of those spirits to whom it has been the training-place for heaven or hell. How much the difference is between the real value, so much the difference in general is between the reputed value; but, as the mathematicians say, it is in the inverse way. But of you I know and hope better, that you will account of him while you are spared together as a precious deposit the Almighty has thought you worthy of . . . . .

"You will look for Glasgow intelligence, and truly I can neither get nor give any. If I should report from my daily ministrations among the poorest class and the worst reported-of class of our population, I should deliver an opinion so favourable as it would be hardly safe for myself to deliver, lest I should be held a *radical* likewise. Now the truth is, I have visited in about three hundred families, and have met with the kindest welcome and entertainment and invitations. Nay, more, I have entered on the tender subject of their present sufferings, in which they are held so ferocious, and have found them in general both able and willing to entertain the religious lesson and improvement arising out of it. This may arise from the way of setting it forth, which I endeavour to make with the utmost tenderness and feeling, as well is due when you see people in the midst of nakedness and starvation. Yet we are armed against them to the teeth; and the alarm took so generally that, for all my convictions

and knowledge, I had engaged a horse-pistol to stand out in defence of my own castle like a true Englishman! But the storm seems over-driven, although this morning, even, there was a summons to the sharp-shooters by break of day, and all the soldiers to arms in the barracks. Nobody knows a whit, and everybody fears a deal. The common ignorance is only surpassed by the common alarm, and that you know is the most agitating of all alarms. But from Monday to Saturday I am going amongst them without the slightest apprehension; but perhaps I may be convinced by point of pike some day, which I pray may be averted for his sake that should hold it. This is not braggadocio, but Christian (feeling); for the blood of the innocent always stains most deeply the hand that sheds it . . . . . I hope my father and you won't forget your Glasgow jaunt. I will introduce you to some of our Calton weavers, now so dreaded, whom Jeffrey the reviewer calls the finest specimens of the human intellect he has met with . . . . I commend to your affection my dear mother, from whom I have had a most affectionate letter; and George, who will prove a credit, I trust, to such two gifted masters as yourself and your humble servant . . . . . To all others, my good and kind friends, commend your affectionate brother,

"EDWARD IRVING."

It was thus that Irving judged of the dangerous masses, who seemed to other eyes so ripe for mischief; and it is characteristic to observe the difference between the manner in which this opinion is expressed, and Dr. Chalmers's deliverance on the same subject, contained in his letters to Wilberforce. There the clear-sighted Scotch legislator, whom his profession bounded to a parish, makes a stride of twenty years to the conclusions of another generation, and lays his hand broadly upon that principle which has now been received among the standard principles of English government. "From my extensive minglings with the people," says Dr. Chalmers, "I am quite confident in affirming the power of another

expedient (that is besides the repeal of certain specified taxes) to be such, that it would operate with all the quickness and effect of a charm in lulling their agitated spirits: I mean the repeal of the Corn Bill. I have ever been in the habit of disliking the interference of the legislature in matters of trade, saving for the purpose of a revenue." Irving has no theories of cure on hand. His thoughts do not embrace the polity of nations. He has not contemplated that troubled sea to divine what secret current it is which heaves its billows into storm. He goes down among the crowds which are made of flesh and blood; he stands among them and calls out with courageous, tender voice that they are all men like others; men trustful and cordial; kind to himself, open to kindness; whom it behoves their neighbours to treat, not with the cruelty of fear, but, "with tenderness and feeling, *as well is due*," he adds with manly and touching simplicity, "*when you see people in the midst of nakedness and starvation.*" A greater contrast in agreement could scarcely be.

A similar testimony to that which I have already quoted, and evidence of the position he took in his Glasgow labours, is conveyed in a letter to Dr. Martin, written upon occasion of the death of a relative, in which after some thoughtful regrets that men take so little pains to "perpetuate for themselves" ties "which give so much enjoyment here, and which, judging from the proportion of things, must give infinitely more hereafter," he thus conveys his impressions of his new sphere in the light most interesting to his friend:—

"It gave me singular pleasure the other night to hear a young man, Mr. Heggie, from Kirkcaldy (foot of Tolbooth

Wynd), who has been of singular utility in this city, reclaiming by Sabbath-school operations the forlorn hope of the Salt Market and Briggate—to hear him date his first impressions of serious religion from the conversations he held with you before his first communion. This should encourage your heart, for he is, as it were, the *nucleus* of an establishment including not less than 700 children; and he is giving them spirit and example in truly a Christian style. Thus the Lord has made you in your parlour instrumental in penetrating and pervading the noisome recesses of this overgrown city. For all the impressions which are abroad I entertain the best opinion of our people; and I consider the leading ones most grossly misinformed, if not misguided by design. Dr. Chalmers's plan is to take up his district of the parish by *groups*. I have superadded the taking of them up family by family; so that every mortal comes in review before me, and into contact with me upon a subject on which they are spoken of as being held by no bounds. Yet so it is—I have hardly encountered anything but the finest play of welcome and congeniality; and this very half hour have I returned from so pervading twenty families in our sorest district, and have been hailed as the bearer of good tidings, though I carried nothing with me but spiritual offers . . . . . I am making the best of St. John's I can, though I have been of late hardly doing myself justice, being generally compressed to Saturday for pulpit preparations by the week-day occupations of visiting, &c.—yet I think it is well employed."

This Glasgow parish had come to singular fortune at that moment. After much labour and many exertions, Chalmers, already the greatest preacher and most eminent man in the entire Scotch establishment, had got himself translated from the Tron Church, which was his first charge in Glasgow—solely in order to carry out those social plans which are the greatest distinctive feature of his life—to St. John's. His theory is well known; but as theories which are well known are apt

enough to glide into vagueness from that very reason, it may not be amiss to repeat, in the simplest manner, what it was. The truth was simply that he had been born, like other men of his generation, into a primitive Scotland, comparatively little affected by English usages and manners — a self-supporting, independent nation, ignorant of poor-laws and workhouses, and full of strenuous hatred to all such hateful charities. During all the centuries of Presbyterianism, "the plate," or weekly offering made at the door of the church on entering, had furnished the parochial revenue of charity; and upon this national and universal provision for the poor the statesman eye of Chalmers fixed with characteristic intentness. Like other men of the greatest type, he was unable to believe that what he might do was yet impossible to others. Resolute to show all Scotland and the world that the Church's ancient primitive provision could yet meet all increased modern emergencies, and able from his high position and influence to bring, half by coercion of moral force, half by persuasion, the Glasgow magistrates to accept his terms, he made it a condition of his remaining among them that this parish of St. John's, one of the largest, poorest, and most degraded in the town, should be handed over to him in undisturbed possession, swept clean of all poor-rates, workhouses, and public parish aid. He did not demand the criminal supervision and power of the sword certainly; though at this distance of time, and to English readers, the one might seem almost as reasonable as the other; but he secured his terms with the puzzled civic functionaries, who half believed in him. In this parish Chalmers set up the most

surprising, splendid autocracy that has ever been attempted—an autocracy solely directed to the benefit of that little world of people in the most unlovely portion of Glasgow. He was no sooner established in his new dominion than he issued imperial orders for a census, and made one in true royal fashion. There were 10,304 souls. The condition in life of most among them was that of weavers, labourers, and factory-workers. About one family in thirty-three kept a servant, and in some parts of the district this point of domestic luxury was even more rare. Bad times, failure of work, and all the casualties of accident and disease would, according to ordinary calculations, leave a large margin of inevitable pauperism in such a district. But the minister-autocrat had sworn that pauperism was to be no longer, and he made good his word. For three brilliant years 'the plate' not only supplied all the wants of the poor in the parish, but did large service besides in the erection of schools; and for thirteen years, as long as the machinery originated by the wonderful imperious vitality of this great man could go on without a new impulse, its success continued as perfect as it was extraordinary. This seems to me the highest and most wonderful victory of Chalmers's life. It is unique in modern annals—a bold return, out of the heart of all those evils of extreme civilisation which crush the poor, into that primitive life when neighbour helped neighbour and friend stood by friend. What an ideal despot, grand patriot autocrat, or irresponsible vizier, that Scotch minister would have made!

In this system of things, Irving took his place in perfect accord, but not resemblance. Statesmanship

was not in him; but admiration and loyal service were of his very essence. Without any ulterior views, he visited those "three hundred families,"—won their confidence and friendship, in most cases readily enough; and when that was not the case, took them captive by innocent wiles and premeditation. One such case, which must have been a remarkable one, is told in so many different versions, that it is difficult to decide which is the true one. A certain shoemaker, radical and infidel, was among the number of those under Irving's special care; a home-workman of course, always present, silent, with his back turned upon the visitors, and refusing any communication except a sullen *humph* of implied criticism, while his trembling wife made her deprecating curtsy in the foreground. The way in which this intractable individual was finally won over, is attributed by some tellers of the story to a sudden happy inspiration on Irving's part; but, by others, to plot and intention. Approaching the bench one day, the visitor took up a piece of patent leather, then a recent invention, and remarked upon it in somewhat skilled terms. The shoemaker went on with redoubled industry at his work; but at last, roused and exasperated by the speech and pretence of knowledge, demanded, in great contempt, but without raising his eyes, "What do *ye* ken about leather?" This was just the opportunity his assailant wanted; for Irving, though a minister and a scholar, was a tanner's son, and could discourse learnedly upon that material. Gradually interested and mollified, the cobbler slackened work, and listened while his visitor described some process of making shoes by machinery, which he had carefully got

up for the purpose. At last the shoemaker so far forgot his caution as to suspend his work altogether, and lift his eyes to the great figure stooping over his bench. The conversation went on with increased vigour after this, till finally the recusant threw down his arms:—"Od, you 're a decent kind o' fellow!—do *you* preach?" said the vanquished, curious to know more of his victor. The advantage was discreetly, but not too hotly pursued; and on the following Sunday the rebel made a defiant, shy appearance at church. Next day Irving encountered him in the savoury Gallowgate, and hailed him as a friend. Walking beside him in natural talk, the tall probationer laid his hand upon the shirt-sleeve of the shrunken sedentary workman, and marched by his side along the well-frequented street. By the time they had reached the end of their mutual way not a spark of resistance was left in the shoemaker. His children henceforward went to school; his deprecating wife went to the kirk in peace. He himself acquired that suit of Sunday "blacks" so dear to the heart of the poor Scotchman, and became a churchgoer and respectable member of society; while his acknowledgment of his conqueror was conveyed with characteristic reticence, and concealment of all deeper feeling, in the self-excusing pretence—"He 's a sensible man, *yon;* he kens about leather!"

The preacher who knew about leather had, however, in conjunction with that cordiality which won the shoemaker's heart, a solemnity and apostolic demeanour which might have looked like affectation in another man, and has, indeed, been called affectation even in Irving by those who did not know him; though never

by any man who did. Probably his long, silent contemplation of that solitary mission which he had set his heart on, had made him frame his very manner and address according to apostolic rule. When he entered those sombre apartments in the Gallowgate, it was with the salutation "Peace be to this house," with which he might have entered a Persian palace or desert tent. "It was very peculiar; a thing that nobody else did," says a simple-minded member of Dr. Chalmers's agency; "it was impossible not to remark it, out of the way as it was; but there was not one of the agency could make an objection to it. It took the people's attention wonderfully." A certain solemn atmosphere entered with that lofty figure, speaking in matchless harmony of voice, its "Peace be to this house." To be prayed for, sometimes edifyingly, sometimes tediously, was not uncommon to the Glasgow poor; but to be blessed was a novelty to them. Perhaps if the idea had been pursued into the depths of their minds, these Presbyterians, all retaining something of ecclesiastical knowledge, however little religion they might have, would have been disposed to deny the right of any man to assume that priestly power of blessing. Irving, however, did not enter into any discussion of the subject. It was his habitual practice; and the agency, puzzled and a little awed, "could not make an objection to it." He did still more than this. He laid his hands upon the heads of the children, and pronounced, with imposing solemnity, the ancient benediction, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee," over each of them—a practice startling to Scotch ears, but acquiesced in involuntarily as natural to the man who, all solitary

and individual in picturesque homely grandeur, went to and fro among them. So grave a preface did not detract from the entire heartiness with which he entered into the concerns of the household; an intercourse which he himself describes with touching simplicity in his farewell sermon addressed to the people of St. John's. It is impossible to give any account of this part of his work half so true or so affecting as is conveyed thus, in his own words:—

"Oh, how my heart rejoices to recur to the hours I have sitten under the roofs of the people, and been made a partaker of their confidence, and a witness of the hardships they had to endure. In the scantiest and perhaps worst times with which this manufacturing city hath ever been pressed, it was my almost daily habit to make a round of their families, and uphold, what in me lay, the declining cause of God. There have I sitten with little silver or gold of my own to bestow, with little command over the charity of others, and heard the various narratives of hardship—narratives uttered for the most part with modesty and patience; oftener drawn forth with difficulty than obtruded on your ear;—their wants, their misfortunes, their ill-requited labour, their hopes vanishing, their families dispersing in search of better habitations, the Scottish economy of their homes giving way before encroaching necessity; debt rather than saving their condition; bread and water their scanty fare; hard and ungrateful labour the portion of their house. All this have I often seen and listened to within naked walls; the witness, oft the partaker, of their miserable cheer; with little or no means to relieve. Yet be it known, to the glory of God and the credit of the poor, and the encouragement of tender-hearted Christians, that such application to the heart's ailments is there in our religion, and such a hold in its promises, and such a pith of endurance in its noble examples, that when set forth by one inexperienced tongue, with soft words and kindly tones, they did never fail to drain the heart of the sourness that calamity engenders,

and sweeten it with the balm of resignation—often enlarge it with cheerful hope, sometimes swell it high with the rejoicings of a Christian triumph."

A more affecting picture of the position of the Christian visitor, "with little or no means to relieve," except by sympathy, and testimony to the consolatory uses of the gospel, was never made. There does not exist human misery under the sun which would not be cheered and softened by such ministrations. He who was "often the partaker of their miserable cheer," who blessed the poor meal and blessed the house, and linked himself to the sufferers by such half-sacramental breaking of the bread of sorrow, could never fail to find his way into their hearts. He was not always, however, without silver or gold of his own to bestow. A little legacy was left him just at the time he describes, a legacy of some sum between thirty and a hundred pounds,—for tradition has come to be doubtful as to the amount. Such a little windfall one might suppose would have been very acceptable to Dr. Chalmers's helper; and so it was; but after a fashion entirely his own. Irving melted his legacy into the one-pound notes current in Scotland, deposited them in his desk, and every morning, as long as they lasted, put one in his pocket when he went out to his visitations. The legacy lasted just as many days as it was pounds in value, and doubtless produced as much pleasure to its owner as ever was purchased by money. What Dr. Chalmers said to this barefaced alms-giving, in the very midst of his social economy, I cannot tell. As to its destination nobody but Irving was any the wiser. It melted into gleams of comfort, transitory but precious; and he who shared

the hard and scanty bread on the poor man's table, could share the better meal when it was in his power to bestow it. This was Irving's idea of his office and functions among the poor. He had learned it theoretically from no other teacher than his own heart. But he had learned the practice of it, which so many fain would acquire without knowing how, in those primitive journeys of his, where his lodgings were found in the cot-house and cabin; and it was his pleasure to make himself as acceptable a guest as if the potato or porridge had been festive dainties, and his entertainers lords and princes. Such a gift of brotherhood, however, is as rare as any gift of genius. Irving was unique in it among his contemporaries; and has had but few equals in any time.

Matters, however, had not changed much up to this period in respect to his preaching. Friends who accompanied him to church when it was his turn to conduct the services, tell, as a very common incident, that the preacher going in was met by groups coming out with disappointed looks, complaining, as the reason of their departure, that "it's no *himsel'* the day." Nothing better was to be looked for when *himsel'* was such a man as Chalmers; and if his assistant felt at all sore on the subject, his mortification must have been much allayed by the unrivalled gifts of his great colleague. There is, however, no sign of soreness or mortification in him. A brilliant vision of what he yet might attain had flickered before his eyes all through his probation, as is apparent by many tokens, but he never disguised from himself his failure in popularity. He smiled to his companions, not without an appreciation of

the joke, when the good people came out of the church door because it was "no himsel'." He did not forget what he had said, that if this people bore with him, they were the first who ever would; nor did he hesitate to repeat that "this congregation is almost the first in which our preaching was tolerated," and even that still, "we know, on the other hand, that our imperfections have not been hid from your eyes." Yet this unpopularity, admitted with frankness so unusual, and perhaps excessive, was by no means universal. Within the great assembly who venerated Dr. Chalmers was a smaller circle who looked upon Irving with all the enthusiastic admiration naturally given to a man whose merits the admirer himself has been the first to find out. "Irving's preaching," said Dr. Chalmers, evidently not with any very great admiration of it, "is like Italian music, appreciated only by connoisseurs." But he does not hesitate to compare the influence of his assistant, on another and more cordial occasion, to a special magnetic spell, which went to the very hearts of those susceptible to it, though it fell blank upon the unimpressionable multitude. On the whole, Dr. Chalmers's opinion of him is the opinion of one who only half understands, and does not more than half sympathise with, a character much less broad, but in some respects more elevated than his own. A certain impatience flashes into the judgment. The statesman and philosopher watches the poet-enthusiast with a doubtful, troubled, half-amused, half-sad perplexity;—likes him, yet does not know what he would be at; is embarrassed by his warm love, praise, and gratitude;—vexed to see him commit himself;—impatient of what he himself thinks credulity, vanity,

waste of power; but never without a sober, regretful affection for the bright, unsteady light that could not be persuaded to shine only in its proper lantern. This sort of admiring, indulgent, affectionate half-comprehension is apparent throughout the whole intercourse of these two great men. That Chalmers was the greater intellect of the two I do not attempt to question; nor yet that he was in all practical matters the more eminent and serviceable man; but that Irving had instinctive comprehensions and graces, which went high over the head of his great contemporary, seems to me as evident as the other conclusion.

A light quite peculiar and characteristic falls upon Glasgow by means of these two figures,—Chalmers, with a certain sweep and wind of action always about him, rushing on impetuous, at the height of his influence, legislating for his parish in bold independence, perhaps the only real Autocrat of his day;—Irving, almost loitering about the unlovely streets, open to all the individual interests thereabouts; learned in the names, the stories, the peculiarities of his three hundred families; still secondary, dependent, dallying with dreams of a time when he should be neither, of a Utopia all his own; not influential at all as yet, only remarkable; noted on the streets, noted in the houses he frequented, an out-of-the-way, incomprehensible man, whose future fortune it was not safe to foretell. In the anecdotes told of him he often looms forth with a certain simple elevation, which is unmoved by ordinary restraints and motives; and always leaves some recollection of his imposing presence upon the memories of all whom he encounters. Amid all the luxuries of

rich, lavish Glasgow, he still set forth afoot in his times of relaxation, in primitive hardness, carrying his own belongings on his shoulder, or helped the weak on his way without a moment's consideration of the propriety of the matter. Thus, on one occasion he is reported to have been on his way to some Presbytery meeting in the country—probably some ordination or settlement which attracted his interest, though not a member of the court. The ministers of the Presbytery were to be conveyed in carriages to the scene of action, but Irving, who was only a spectator and supernumerary, set off on foot, according to his usual custom. The "brethren" in their carriages came up to him on the way—came up at least to a tall, remarkable figure, which would have been undeniably that of Dr. Chalmers's helper, but that it bore a pedlar's pack upon its stalwart shoulders, and was accompanied side by side by the fatigued proprietor of the same. To the laughter and jokes which hailed him, however, Irving presented a rather affronted, indignant aspect. He could see no occasion for either laughter or remark. The pedlar was a poor Irishman worn out with his burden. "His countrymen were kind to me," said the offended probationer, recalling those days when, sick at heart, he plunged among the Ulster cabins, and got some comfort out of his wanderings. He carried the pack steadily till its poor owner was rested and ready to resume it, and thought it only natural. On another occasion he had gone down to visit his old friend, Mr. Story, of Rosneath, in that beautiful little peninsula; and in the sweet gloaming of a summer night stood on the narrow tongue of land called Row Point, and shouted across

the tiny strait for a boat. As he stood with his portmanteau on his shoulder, among the twilight shadows, he heard an answer over the water, and presently saw the boat gliding across the loch; but when it had reached half way, to Irving's amazement and impatience, it turned back: some commotion arose on the opposite side, lights flickered about the bank, and only after a considerable interval and many impatient shouts, the oars began again to dip into the water, and the boat approached heavily. When Irving demanded why he had turned back, and had kept him so long waiting, the boatman, gliding up to the beach, looked discomfited and incredulous at his passenger. "I thought you were a man on horse!" cried the startled ferryman, looking up bewildered at the gigantic figure and portmanteau, which distance and darkness had shaped into a centaur. He had gone back to fetch the horse-boat, which in all its cumbrous convenience was now thrust up upon the shingle. Irving did not appreciate the consideration. It even appears that he lost his temper on the occasion, and did not see the joke when the story was told.

In one of those walking excursions he penetrated into the depths of Ayrshire, and reached at nightfall the house of the Howies of Lochgoin,—a name which recalls all the covenanting traditions of that wild district. The family were at prayers—or "worship," as it is usual to call it in Scotland—and one of its members remembers the surprising apparition of the tall stranger in the *spence*, or outer room, when they all rose from their knees, as having had a rather alarming effect upon the family, whose devotions he had joined unheard, and to whose house he bade his usual "Peace,"

Though they were entirely strangers to him, Irving not only made friends, but established to his own satisfaction a link of relationship, by means of the Waldensian Howys, from whom he himself boasted descent. The original family of refugees, according to his own account, had split into two branches, one of which wandered to Ayrshire, while one settled in Annan. The link thus accidentally found was warmly remembered, and the *Orations*, published when Irving was at his height of early glory, and one of the most largely read and brilliantly criticised of modern works, found its way by the hand of the first traveller he could hear of, from that world of London which turned his head, as people imagine, down to the moorland solitudes of Lochgoin.

The year after his arrival in Glasgow he made another visit to Ireland, which was attended by one amusing result, upon which his friends often rallied him. He had made an appointment with a young Glasgow friend to meet him at Annan, in his father's house, with the idea of guiding the stranger through those moors and mosses of Dumfriesshire which were so dear and well known to himself. But while his friend kept the appointment carefully, Irving, seduced by the pleasures of his ramble, or induced, as appears from a letter, to lengthen it out by a little incursion into England from Liverpool, forgot all about it. The accommodations of Gavin Irving's house at Annan were limited; and though there was no limit to Mrs. Irving's motherly hospitality, it was not easy to entertain the unknown guest. The youngest of the handsome sisters had to exert herself in this emergency. She showed the young

stranger the way to the waterside and all the modest beauties of the little town. The young man did not miss his friend, nor was any way impatient for Edward's arrival; and when the truant did come, at the end of a fortnight, he was called upon to greet the stranger, whom he had himself sent to Annan, as his sister's affianced husband,—an astonishing but very happy conclusion, as it turned out, to his own carelessness.

At another holiday time Irving accompanied a member of his congregation in some half-pleasure, half-business excursion in a gig. During this journey the pair were about to drive down a steep descent, when Irving, whose skill as a driver was not great, managed to secure the reins, and accomplished the descent at so amazing a pace that several of a little party of soldiers, who were crossing a bridge at the foot of the hill, were driven into the stream by the vehemence of the unexpected charge. Some little distance further on, the gig and the travellers paused at a roadside inn, into the public room of which entered, after a while, several of these soldiers. Two of them regarded with whispered conferences the driver of the gig; and when an opportunity of conversation offered, one of the two addressed Irving. "This man," said the skilful Scotch conversationalist, "thinks he's the wisest man in a' the regiment. What do ye think, sir? He says you're the great Dr. Chalmers." "And do you really think," asked Irving, with an appeal to the candour of this inquiring mind, "that I look like a minister?" "My certy, no!" cried the simple-minded warrior; "or you wouldna drive like *yon!*"

Such comic lights, often dwelt upon and much ap-

preciated by his friends, played about this unusual figure, necessary accompaniments of its singular aspect. To his intimates he opened his heart so freely, and exhibited all his peculiarities after so transparent a fashion, that those points of his character which might have appeared defects to the eyes of strangers, were dear to those who loved him, originating as they did in his own perfect affectionateness and sincerity. "He was vain, there is no denying it," writes a dear friend of his; "but it was a vanity proceeding out of what was best and most lovable in him,—his childlike simplicity and desire to be loved;—his crystal transparency of character letting every little weakness show through it as frankly as his noblest qualities; and, above all, out of his loyal, his divine trust in the absolute truth and sincerity, and the generous sympathy and good-will of all who made friendly advances towards him." But his aspect to the general mass, who saw him only "in society," or in the pulpit, was of a different kind. The solemnity of his appearance and manners impressed that outside audience. He spoke in language "such as grave livers do in Scotland use," with a natural pomp of diction at all times; and took a certain priestly attitude which is not usual in Scotland,—the attitude of a man who stands between God and his fellows. A story, for which I will not vouch, is told of one such remarkable appearance which he made at a Glasgow dinner-party. A young man was present who had permitted himself to talk profanely, in a manner now unknown, and which would not be tolerated in any party now-a-days. After expending all his little wit upon Priestcraft and its inventions, this youth,

getting bold by degrees, at last attacked Irving—who had hitherto taken no notice of him—directly, as one of the world-deluding order. Irving heard him out in silence, and then turned to the other listeners. "My friends," he said, "I will make no reply to this unhappy youth, who hath attacked the Lord in the person of his servant; but let us pray that this his sin may not be laid to his charge;" and with a solemn motion of his hand, which the awe-struck diners-out instinctively obeyed, Irving rosé up to his full majestic height, and solemnly commended the offender to the forgiveness of God. Whether this incident really occurred I cannot tell; but it is one of the anecdotes told of him, and it certainly embodies the most popular conception of his demeanour and bearing.

The labours of all engaged in that parish were unceasing; and in addition to the two services on each Sunday, which were Irving's share of the work, and the perpetual round of parochial visits and occasional services, he was "always ready,"—as says Mr. David Stowe, the educational reformer of Glasgow, whose life-long work was then commencing in a great system of Sunday schools,—to lend his aid wherever it was required. When the Sunday scholars were slow to be drawn out, or the district unpromising, or a more distinct impulse necessary than could be given by mere visits and invitations, Irving did not hesitate to go down with the anxious teacher to his "proportion," and with his Bible in his hand, take his station against the wall, and address the slowly gathering assembly all unused to out-of-door addresses, a species of ministrations which were at the period considered rather

beneath the dignity of ministers of the Church. Irving had also the charge of visiting the convicts in prison; and is said to have done so on some occasions with great effect. One of those unhappy persons had been condemned for a murder, though strenuously denying his guilt. After his conviction, the unhappy man succeeded in interesting his visitor by his assertions of innocence; and when Irving left the prison, it was to plunge into the dens of the Gallowgate, taking with him as assistants a private friend of his own, and a member of Dr. Chalmers's agency—to make a last anxious effort to discover whether any exculpatory evidence was to be found. The surviving member of that generous party remembers how they searched through the foul recesses of the Glasgow St. Giles's; and went to all the haunts of their wretched client, a charitable, forlorn hope. But the matter, it turned out, was hopeless; what they heard confirmed, instead of shaking, the justice of the conviction, and the bootless investigation was given up.

But the kind of work in which he was thus engaged was not the great work in which his fame was to be gained, or his use in his generation manifested. In all that is told of him he appears in the shade—only supplementing the works of another; and it is amusing to observe, even at this long distance of time, that the ancient office-bearers of St. John's, once Dr. Chalmers's prime ministers in the government of that, his kingdom, can scarcely yet forbear a certain patronising regard towards Dr. Chalmers's helper. They all went to hear him, like virtuous men, who set a good example to the flock, and tolerated the inexperience of

the strange probationer; and sat out, with a certain self-complacence, those sermons which were to stir to its depths a wider world than that of Glasgow. One here and there even detected a suspicion of unsoundness in the vehement addresses of the young preacher; and I have been told of a most singular, unorthodox sentiment of his—unorthodox, but at exact antipodes from later sentiments equally unlawful—which one zealous hearer noted down in those old days, and submitted to Dr. Chalmers as a matter which should be noticed. Wise Chalmers only smiled, and shook his head. He himself had but an imperfect understanding of his assistant; but he was not to be persuaded by the evidence of one stray sentence that his brother had gone astray.

Thus Irving lived, in the shade. Some of those friends to whom he attached himself so fervently, young men like himself, not yet settled down into the proprieties of life, supported his claims to a higher appreciation with vehement partisanship, which proceeded as much from love to the man as from admiration of his genius. Here and there an eager boy, in the ragged red gown which Glasgow uses for academical costume, recognised, with the intuition of youth, the high eloquence flashing over those slumbrous heads. But on the whole, the Glasgow congregation sat patronisingly quiet, and listened, without much remarking what the "helper had to say." As much as the ordinary brain could bear, they had already heard, or were to hear the same day from "the Doctor himsel'." Under such circumstances it was scarcely to be expected that they could do more than listen calmly to the addresses of

the other preacher, whose manner, and looks, and mode of address were all undoubtedly exceptional, and subject to criticism. Such a strain would have been impossible to any merely mortal audience; so the good people drowsed through the afternoons, and were kind to Mr. Irving; they were very glad to hear the Doctor found him so serviceable among his poor; that the agency made so good a report of him; and that altogether he was likely to do well. They told the current stories of his gigantic form, and doubtful looks, and odd ways—laughed at his impetuous individuality with kindness, but amusement—and had as little idea of the fame he was to reach, as of any other incomprehensible event. The profound unconsciousness in which this strange little community, all dominated and governed by their leader and his great project, held lightly the other great intelligence in the midst of them, is as strange a picture of human nature as could be seen. It reminds one of that subtle law of evidence which Sir Walter Scott introduces so dramatically in accounting for the recognition of his hero Bertram, in *Guy Mannering*, by the postilion, who had seen him without an idea of recognising him before. "Wha was thinking o' auld Ellangowan then?" says Jock Jabos. The principle holds good in wider questions. The Glasgow people had their eyes fixed upon one man of genius and his great doings. They certainly saw the other man in the shadow of his chief, and had a perception, by the way, of his stature and peculiarities. But who was thinking of genius or extraordinary endowments in Dr. Chalmers's helper? Their eyes had not been directed to him; they saw him always in the

shade, carrying out another man's ideas, and dominated by another man's superior influence; and this most natural and prevailing principle of human thought kept Irving obscure and unrevealed to their eyes.

The same influence gradually wrought upon himself. It is apparent that there was much in his Glasgow life which he enjoyed, and which suited him; and no more loyal expression of regard for a master and leader was ever written than the dedication afterwards addressed to Dr. Chalmers, in which he thanks God for "that dispensation which brought me acquainted with your good and tender-hearted nature, whose splendid accomplishments I knew already; and you now live in the memory of my heart more than in my admiration. While I laboured as your assistant, my labours were never weary; they were never enough to express my thankfulness to God for having associated me with such a man, and my affection to the man with whom I was associated." To the same tenor is the tone of his farewell sermon, the first production which he ever gave to the press, and in which, not without much strenuous argument for the freedom of individual preaching, his favourite and oft-repeated theme, he acknowledges "the burden of my obligations to my God," in respect to his residence in Glasgow. "He has given me," says the preacher, his heart swelling with all the gratitude and affection which kindness always produced in him, and the warm impulse of his nature casting all drawbacks behind, "the fellowship of a man mighty in his Church, an approving congregation of his people, the attachment of a populous corner of his vineyard. I ask no more of heaven for the future but to grant me

the continuance of the portion which, by the space of three years, I have here enjoyed. But this I need not expect. Never again shall I find another man of transcendent genius whom I can love as much as I admire—into whose house I can go in and out like a son—whom I can revere as a father, and serve with the devotion of a child—never shall I find another hundred consociated men of piety, and by free-will consociated, whose every sentiment I can adopt, and whose every scheme I can find delight to second. And I feel I shall never find another parish of ten thousand into every house of which I was welcomed as a friend, and solicited back as a brother."

This was one side of the picture: sincerely felt and fully expressed, without any restraint from the thought that on the other side he had expressed, and yet should express as fully, his weariness, his longings for a scene of action entirely his own; his almost disgust with a subordination which had now exceeded the natural period of probation. It was no part of Irving's temper to acknowledge any such restraint. What he said in the fullest, grateful sincerity, he did not stumble and choke over because he was aware of having on another occasion expressed, with equal warmth, another phase of feeling, equally sincere, though apparently inconsistent. That he should have been content with the position which he describes in such glowing colours would have been simply unnatural. He had now attained the age when it becomes necessary for a man to do what he has to do in this world for himself, and not for another: he was approaching the completion of his thirtieth year. Nature herself protested that he could remain no longer

dependent and secondary; and that it was time to be done with probationary efforts. His thoughts, which had been so long kept silent while his heart burned, and so long indifferently listened to by a pre-occupied audience, must have full course. His energy must have scope in an independent field. To stand aside longer, with all his conscious powers burning within him, was gradually becoming impossible to Irving. At the very moment when he recognised with generous enthusiasm the advantages of his position, he felt its limits and confinements like a chain of iron round his neck. The bondage, though these were the most desirable of bonds, was gradually growing intolerable. He was a man fully equipped and prepared, aware of a longer probation, a sterner prelude, a harder training than most men. We will not venture to say that the natural sweetness of his heart could have been embittered even by the continuance of this unencouraging labour; but, at all events, nature took alarm, and felt herself in danger. He received an invitation to go to Kingston, in Jamaica, to a Presbyterian congregation there, and is said to have taken it into serious consideration, and only to have been deterred from accepting it by the opposition of his friends. White men or black men, what did it matter, so long as he could build, not upon another man's foundation, but do his own work as God has ordained to every man? And failing that, his ancient missionary thoughts returned to his mind; I cannot help thinking that there is something wonderfully pathetic and touching in this project, which he carried so far upon the way of life with him, and to which up to this moment he always recurred when his path

became dark or impracticable. I could fancy it a suggestion of heaven to turn aside his feet, while it was yet possible, from that fiery ordeal and passage of agony through which his course lay. The same thoughts, which once filled his chamber in Bristo Street, came back in the winter of 1821, when, after two years' labour in Glasgow, he saw himself no further advanced in his independent way than when, full of hopes, he had come there to open his mouth in his Master's service. Dr. Chalmers could get many assistants, but Edward Irving could get but one life, and was this all it was destined to come to? Again he saw himself going forth forlorn, giving up all things for his Lord; carrying the gospel afar, over distant mountains, distant plains, into the far Eastern wastes. It was an enterprise to make the heart beat and swell, but it was death to all human hopes. When he grasped that cross the roses and laurels would fade out of his expectation for ever. Love and fame must both be left behind. It was in him to leave them behind had the visible moment arrived, and the guidance of Providence appeared. But he understood while he pondered what was the extent of the sacrifice.

Just at this moment the clouds opened — he has described it so well in his own words that it would be worse than vanity to use any other: —

"The Caledonian Church had been placed under the pastoral care of two worthy ministers, who were successively called to parochial charges in the Church of Scotland; and by their removal, and for want of a stated ministry, it was reduced to great and almost hopeless straits. But faith hopeth against hope, and when it does so, never faileth to be rewarded. This was proved in the case of those two men whose

names I have singled out from your number, to give them that honour to which they are entitled in the face of the congregation. Having heard through a friend of theirs, and now also of mine, but at that time unknown to me, of my unworthy labours in Glasgow, as assistant to the Rev. Dr. Chalmers, they commissioned him to speak to me concerning their vacant church, and not to hide from me its present distress.

"Well do I remember the morning when, as I sat in my lonely apartment, meditating the uncertainties of a preacher's calling, and revolving in my mind purposes of missionary work, this stranger stepped in upon my musing, and opened to me the commission with which he had been charged. The answer which I made to him, with which also I opened my correspondence with the brethren, whose names are mentioned above, was to this effect: 'If the times permitted, and your necessities required that I should not only preach the gospel without being burdensome to you, but also by the labour of my hands minister to your wants, this would I esteem a more honourable degree than to be Archbishop of Canterbury.' And such as the beginning was, was also the continuance and ending of this negotiation. . . . Being in such a spirit towards one another, the preliminaries were soon arranged — indeed I may say needed no arrangement — and I came up on the day before the Christmas of 1821, to make trial and proof of my gifts before the remnant of the congregation which still held together." *

Ere, however, going to London, he seems to have made a brief visit to Edinburgh, where he obtained from the Rev. Dr. Fleming, one of the most highly esteemed Evangelical ministers there, a letter of introduction to Dr. Waugh, of London, which I have

* Dedication of the *Last Days* to W. Dinwiddie, Esq., Father of the Session of the National Scotch Church; W. Hamilton, Esq., Secretary of the Committee for building the National Scotch Church; and to the other members of the Session and Committee.

found among other papers relating to his removal to London. These credentials were as follows:—

"Edinburgh, 13th December, 1821.

"DEAR SIR,—Allow me to introduce to you Mr. Edward Irving, preacher of the gospel, who goes to London on invitation to preach in the Caledonian Chapel, with the view of being called to take the pastoral charge of the congregation assembling in that place. I need not tell you what you will at once perceive, that he is a large raw-boned Scotchman, and that his outward appearance is rather uncouth; but I can tell you that his mind is, in proportion, as large as his body; and that whatever is unprepossessing in his appearance will vanish as soon as he is known; his mind is, I had almost said, gigantic. There is scarcely a branch of human science which he does not grasp, and in some degree make his own. As a scholar, and as a man of science, he is eminently distinguished. His great talents he has applied successfully to the acquisition of professional knowledge, and both his talents and acquisitions he is, I believe, sincerely resolved to consecrate to the service of his great Master. His views of Scripture truth, while they are comprehensive, are, in my judgment, sound. His exhibition of them, indeed, I thought at one time exceptionable, as too refined and abstract for ordinary hearers; but that was when he contemplated the duties of a preacher as a spectator, being ordinarily occupied with other important avocations. For some time past, however, he has been actively employed in the vineyard, in the character of assistant to Dr. Chalmers, of Glasgow, and it is no small commendation that the Doctor is in the highest degree pleased with him and attracted to him. His connection with the Doctor has probably accelerated what experience would have in time produced in a man of his mind and principles: it has brought him down to the level of plain, sound preaching. This effect has been still further promoted in the exercise of a duty which he has had to perform, visiting the families of the parish, and conversing with them about their spiritual interests. This was a duty in which he engaged with great zeal; and he is considered as possessing a particu-

lar faculty for performing it. As a man, he is honourable, liberal, independent in his mind, fearless in the discharge of his duties, and exemplary in his general deportment. In short, taking into view his whole character and qualifications, his talents, his acquirements, his principles, his zeal, and his capacity of exertion, I know nobody who seems better fitted for discharging the duties of a gospel minister in the metropolis, faithfully, usefully, and respectably, than Mr. Irving. . . . If you can be of any service to Mr. Irving, either with the managers of the chapel, or in the event of his remaining in London, by introducing him to any of your friends in the ministry, I shall esteem it a favour. . . . Mr. Irving has come upon me unexpectedly, and I have barely time to add that I am, with great regard, dear sir, yours faithfully,

"THOMAS FLEMING."

The kind elaboration of this old-fashioned recommendatory letter, written in days when people thought it worth while to fill their paper, secured Irving a friend; and many of its carefully detailed particulars are sadly amusing in the light of all the after-revelations; as, indeed, the calm unconsciousness with which an ordinary man holds up his light to show forth the figure of an Immortal has always a certain ludicrous-pathetic element in it. Armed with this, and doubtless with various others which have not escaped oblivion, the "large raw-boned Scotchman" set out for London, with unconcealed and honest eagerness. What he wanted was not a benefice, or even an income, for hopeless enough in that way were the prospects of the little fainting Scotch Church, buried amid the crowded lanes about Holborn, which successive vacancies and discouragements had reduced to the very lowest point at which it could venture to call itself a congregation. If it had been practicable — if, as Irving himself says,

"the times had permitted," there cannot be the slightest doubt that the vehement young man would have been content to conjoin any apostolic handicraft with his spiritual office rather than resign that longed-for pulpit, in which he could say forth unchecked the message that was in him; and he does not attempt with any affected coyness to conceal his own eager desire for this, the first independent standing-ground which was ever placed fairly in his power. From the moment that he heard of it, the idea seems to have taken full possession of him. Nowhere else could he do such good service to his Master's cause. Nowhere could the human ambition which possessed him find readier satisfaction. Nowhere else was the utterance with which he was overbrimming so deeply needed. He seems to have felt with magical suddenness and certainty that here was his sphere.

His own appreciation of his welcome in London, and the hopes excited in his mind by this new development of affairs, may be learnt from the following letter, addressed to his much regarded pupil and friend, Miss Welsh.

"Glasgow, 34 Kent Street, 9th February, 1822.

"My dear and lovely Pupil,—When I am my own master, delivered from the necessity of attending to engagements, ever soliciting me upon the spot where I am, and exhausting me to very lassitude before the evening, when my friendly correspondence should commence, then, and not till then, shall I be able, I fear, to discharge my heart of the obligations which it feels to those at a distance. Do excuse me, I pray you, by the memory of our old acquaintance, and anything else which it is pleasant to remember, for my neglect to you in London, and not to you alone, I am sorry to say, but to every one whom I was not officially bound to write to, even my

worthy father. Forget and forgive it; and let us be established in our former correspondence as if no such sin against it had ever taken place. I could say some things on my own behalf; but till you go to London, which I hope will not be till I am there to be a brother to you, you could not at all sympathise with them.

"And know now, though late, that my head is almost turned with the approbation I received—certainly my head is turned; for from being a poor desolate creature, melancholy of success, yet steel against misfortune, I have become all at once full of hope and activity. My hours of study have doubled themselves—my intellect, long unused to expand itself, is now awakening again, and truth is revealing itself to my mind. And perhaps the dreams and longings of my fair correspondent* may yet be realised. I have been solicited to publish a discourse which I delivered before his Royal Highness the Duke of York; but have refused till my apprehensions of truth be larger, and my treatment of it more according to the models of modern and ancient times. The thanks of all the directors I have received formally—the gift of all the congregation of the Bible used by his Royal Highness. The elders paid my expenses in a most princely style. My countrymen of the first celebrity, especially in art, welcomed me to their society, and the first artist in the city drew a most admirable half-length miniature of me in action. And so, you see, I have reason to be vain.

"But these things, my dear Jane, delight me not, save as vouchsafements of my Maker's bounty, the greater because the more undeserved. Were I established in the love and obedience of Him, I should rise toweringly aloft into the regions of a very noble and sublime character, and so would my highly-gifted pupil, to retain whose friendship shall be a consolation to my life: to have her fellowship in divine ambitions would make her my dear companion through eternity.

"To your affectionate mother, whose indulgence gives me this pleasant communication with her daughter, I have to express my attachment in every letter. May you live worthy

* He refers to his young friend's affectionate prophecies of his future fame.

of each other, mutual stays through life, doubly endeared, because alone together; and therefore doubly dutiful to Him who is the husband of the widow, and the Father of the fatherless. I have sent this under cover to my friend T. C., not knowing well where you are at present. If in Edinburgh, offer my benedictions upon your uncle's new alliance. I hope to be in Edinburgh soon, where I will not be without seeing you.

"I am, my dear pupil,

"Your affectionate friend,

"EDWARD IRVING."

"Wherewith" (namely, with the trial of his gifts) "being satisfied," he continues, in the dedication already quoted, "I took my journey homewards, waiting the good pleasure of the great Head of the Church. Many were the difficulties and obstacles which Satan threw in the way, and which threatened hard to defeat altogether our desire and our purpose of being united in one. Amongst others, one, which would have deterred many men, was my inability to preach in the Gaelic tongue, of which I knew not a word." This absurd stipulation originated in the connection of the Caledonian Chapel with the Caledonian Asylum, the directors of which are those whom he records as having thanked him formally—an institution originally intended for the orphan children of soldiers and sailors, and of whose officebearers the Duke of York, the Commander-in-Chief, was president. This institution is still in existence, and until the disruption of the Church of Scotland, still sent its detachments of children into the galleries of the National Scotch Church, built to replace the little Caledonian Chapel. But at that period it was its connection with the great charity which alone gave the little chapel

importance. Other Scotch Churches, more flourishing and prosperous, were in existence; but the chapel in Hatton Garden had a trifling parliamentary allowance, in direct consideration of its connection with the Asylum, and the minister's powers of preaching Gaelic. This initial difficulty called forth from Irving the following characteristic letter :—

"To my honoured friends, Mr. Dinwiddie, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Hamilton, and others connected with the Caledonian Chapel, to whom I have the pleasure of being known, and who take an interest in my coming to London.

"GENTLEMEN,—My friend Mr. Laurie has called to report to me the result of the last meeting of Directors of the Asylum; and as Mr. Hamilton requested him to make it known to me, I feel myself called upon to do my endeavour to make you comfortable under, and also if possible to extricate you from, the embarrassment in which you may feel yourselves.

"First. Let my interest be as nothing. The Lord will provide for me; and since I left you His providence has presented me with the offer of a chapel of ease in Dundee, with the probable reversion of the first vacant living in the place. This, of course, I refused. The people of New York are inquiring for me to succeed the great Dr. Mason—at least are writing letters to that effect. This I do not think will come to any head, because I am not worthy of the honour. But I mention both to show you in what good hands my fortune is, when it is left to God alone.

"Secondly. But if, for the interests of your own souls, and religion in general, and the Scotch Church in particular, you do still desire my services among you, then I am ready at any call, and almost on any conditions, for my own spirit is bent to preach the Gospel in London.

"Thirdly. If the gentlemen of the Asylum would not mistake for importunity and seeking of a place, what I offer from a desire to mediate peace, and benefit the best interests of my

countrymen, I pledge myself to study Gaelic; and if I cannot write it and preach it in six months, I give them my missive to be burdensome to them no longer. There was a time when the consciousness of my own powers would have made it seem as meanness so to condescend; but now the lowness of condescension for Christ's sake I feel to be the height of honour.

"Fourthly. But if not, and you are meditating, as Mr. Hamilton says, to obtain another place of worship to which to call me, then be assured I shall not be difficult to persuade to come amongst you; and I shall not distress your means; but content with little, minister, in humble dependence upon God, the free grace of the Gospel.

"Finally, gentlemen, should I never see your faces any more, my heart is towards you, and my prayers are for you, and the blessing of the Lord God shall be upon us all if we seek his face; and we shall dwell together in that New Jerusalem where there is no temple and no need of any pastors; but the Lamb doth lead them and feed them by rivers of living waters, and wipes away all tears from their eyes.

"Commend me to your families in love and brotherhood, and do ye all regard me as

"Your obliged and affectionate friend,

"Edward Irving.

"Glasgow, 21st February, 1822."

The Directors of the Caledonian Asylum were not, however, "so far left to themselves," as we say in Scotland, as to insist upon the six months of Gaelic study thus heroically volunteered. The Duke of York exerted his influence to set aside the stipulation; and after it had answered its purpose in stimulating the warmth of both parties, and adding a little more suspense and uncertainty to Irving's long probation, the difficulty was overcome. Or rather, to use his own words, "God, having proved our willingness, was pleased to remove this obstacle out of the way." Upon this another difficulty arose. It is a rule of the Church

of Scotland not to ordain any minister over a congregation until they are first certified that the people are able and prepared to provide him with a fit income — "to give him a livelihood," as Irving says simply. This is usually done in the form of a bond, submitted to the Presbytery before the ordination, by which the stipend is fixed at a certain rate, which the officebearers pledge themselves to maintain. This was a difficult point for the poor little handful at Hatton Garden, who had only been able to keep themselves together by great exertions, and to whom only the valuable but scanty nucleus of fifty adherents belonged. The Presbytery in consequence demurred to the ordination; and once more the matter came to a temporary standstill. The following letter, addressed to Mr. William Hamilton, one of the principal members of the Caledonian Chapel, will show how Irving regarded this new obstruction:—

"My dear Sir,—Though I received so many and so kind attentions from you in London, the great diversity of my occupations, and my frequent visits of late to different parts of the country, in the prospect of removal, have hindered me from ever presenting my acknowledgments, not the less felt, be assured, on that account. The confidence and frequency of our intercourse makes me assured, when I come to London, that we shall find in each other steady friends; and it is delightful in the prospect opening up, that I have such friends to come to. The bearer is my brother-in-law, Mr. Warren Carlyle, a young man of most admirable character, both moral and religious. He is in London on business, and will be able to inform you in all my affairs. I am doing my utmost to get the Presbytery to consent to my ordination without a bond, and I hope to succeed. But if they will not, I come in June, ordination or no ordination; and if they are not content with the security I am content with, then I shall be content to do without their ordination and seek it else-

where, or apply for it after. But I augur better. . . . . Mr. Dinwiddie must not consider me wanting in affection that it is so long since I wrote to him personally; assure him and all his family, I pray, of my gratitude and high regards, which many years, I trust, will enable me to testify. . . . . May all good be with you, and my other acquaintances; and may I be enabled, when I come among you, to do more than fulfil all your expectations,—till which happy junction may we be preserved in the grace of the Lord.

"Yours most affectionately,

"EDWARD IRVING.

"Paisley, 24th April, 1822."

To Paisley, from which this letter is dated, Irving was in the habit of walking out on Saturday afternoons, to snatch a little domestic relaxation at the tea-table of the family into which his sister had married; and had a liberal habit of inviting chance fellow-travellers whom he encountered by the way to accompany him, occasionally to the considerable confusion and amazement of his kind hosts. On one of these occasions he introduced a stranger of shy and somewhat gruff demeanour, who spoke little, whose name nobody heard distinctly, and whom the good people set down as some chance pedestrian, a little out of his ease in "good society," whom Irving had picked up on the way. They were not undeceived until years after, when a member of the family, then in London, had one of the greatest of living authors, Thomas Carlyle, reverentially pointed out to her, and recognised, with horror and astonishment, the doubtful stranger whom she had entertained and smiled at in her father's house.

The "bond," however, which Irving, generous and impetuous, would have been well content to dispense

with, but which the prudent Presbytery insisted upon, was at length procured. "Another obstacle to my ordination your readiness," says Irving in the dedication already quoted, "without any request of mine, removed out of the way. To those brethren who came forward so voluntarily and so liberally on that occasion, the church and the minister of the church are much beholden; and all of us are beholden to God, who useth us, in any way, however humble, for the accomplishment of his good purposes."

Everything was now settled, and only the necessary ecclesiastical preliminaries remained. The young man was at the highest pitch of hope and anticipation. As he had not concealed his eagerness to go, he did not conceal the high expectations with which he entered the longed-for field. Expressions of his hopes and projects burst forth wherever he went — misconstrued, of course, by many; received with cold wonder, and treated as boasts and braggadocio; but understood and believed by some. And the only evidence of other sentiments which appears in his correspondence — contained in a letter to Dr. Martin, evidently written in a moment of depression — still characteristically exhibits the high pitch of his anticipations: — "There are a few things which bind me to the world, and but a very few," writes the young man in this effusion of momentary weariness; "one is to make a demonstration for a higher style of Christianity, something more magnanimous, more heroical than this age affects. God knows with what success." These wonderful prophetic words, written in some moment of revulsion, when the very height of satisfaction and triumph had brought a sud-

den depth of temporary depression to his sensitive soul, are the only visible trace of those clouds which can never be wholly banished from the brightest firmament. During the last week of his residence in Glasgow, he went to Rosneath to visit and take farewell of his friend Mr. Story, accompanied by another clerical friend, who went with him in wonder and dread, often inquiring how the farewell sermon, which was to be delivered on Sunday, could come into being. This good man perceived with dismay that Irving was not occupied about his farewell sermon, and declared with friendly vexation that if anything worthy of a leave-taking with the people of St. John's was produced by the departing preacher under such circumstances, he would prove himself "the cleverest man in Scotland." Irving, however, was not dismayed. He went joyfully over loch and hill in that sweet holiday of hope. The world was all before him, and everything was possible. No more limits except those of the truth, nor obliteration under another man's shadow. All this time he had been but painfully fitting and putting his armour together; now he was already close to the lists, and heard the trumpets of the battle, with laughter like that of the war-horse; a little longer and he should be in the field.

One day in this happy period, when going about the country with his friend, Irving, active, as of old, and full of glee and energy, leaped a gate which interposed in their way. This feat took the minister of Rosneath a little by surprise, as was natural. "Dear me, Irving," he exclaimed, "I did not think you had been so agile." Irving turned upon him immediately, "Once I read you an essay of mine," said the preacher, "and you said,

'Dear me, Irving, I did not think you had been so classical;' another time you heard me preach, 'Dear me, Irving, I did not know you had so much imagination.' Now you shall see what great things I will do yet!"

In this state of exulting expectation, he was not more patient than usual of the ordinary orthodoxy round him. While himself the sincerest son of his mother Church, and loving her very standards with a love which never died out of him, he was always intolerant of the common stock of dry theology, and the certified *soundness* of dull men. "You are content to go back and forward on the same route, like this boat," he is reported to have said, as the party struck across the swelling waters of the Gair-loch; "but as for me, I hope yet to go deep into the ocean of truth." Words over-bold and incautious, like most of his words; yet wonderfully characteristic of the unconcealed exaltation of mind and hope in which he was.

So he returned to Glasgow, still accompanied by the alarmed and anxious friend, who could get no satisfaction about his farewell sermon,—such an occurrence as this solemn leave-taking, to which the little world looked forward, was an event in the history of the parish. It was an occasion such as preachers generally make the most of, and in which natural sentiment permits them a little freedom and deliverance from the ordinary restraints of the pulpit. And it was, perhaps, the first opportunity which Irving had ever had, with all eyes concentrated on himself, to communicate his thoughts without risk of the inevitable comparison, or the jealousy equally inevitable, of those who resented

the idea of the assistant attempting to rival "the Doctor." He was now no longer Dr. Chalmers's assistant, but a London minister elect; and when the bonds which bound him were unloosed, all the kindnesses of the past rushed warm upon the memory of the impulsive young man. He came into the pulpit glowing with a tender flush of gratitude; his discontent and weariness had dropped off from him, and existed no longer; he remembered only the love, the friendship, the good offices, the access he had obtained to many hearts. In that sermon, of which his companion despaired, the materials required little research or arrangement. The preacher had but to go back upon his own life of two years, seen in the warm reviving light of farewell kindness. He stood up in that pulpit, the last time he was to occupy it by right of his present position, and calmly told the astonished hearers of his own unpopularity, of their forbearance yet not applause, of the "imperfections which had not been hid from their eyes," yet of the brotherly kindness which they, and especially the poor among them, had shown him; and proclaimed the praises of his leader with a warmth and heartfelt fulness which distressed and overwhelmed that sober Scotsman, unaccustomed to and disapproving of such demonstrations of attachment. Even upon that unenthusiastic and pre-occupied audience, this farewell address seems to have made an impression. He left them at peace with all men; and forgetting, as his affectionate temperament had a faculty for forgetting, all his annoyances and discomforts there. This farewell took away every possibility of bitterness. They were all his friends whom he left behind, He gave a wide,

but warm, universal invitation to all. His house, his services, all that he could do, were freely pledged to whosoever of those parishioners might come to London and stand in need of him. He meant what he said, unguarded and imprudent as the expression was; and the people instinctively understood that he did so. It was thus with the warmest effusion of good-will that he left Glasgow, where, as in every other place, there was no lack of people who smiled at him, were doubtful of him, and patronised him with amusing toleration; but where nobody now or then had an unkind word to say.

When the farewell was over, and the sermon had met with its award, that good, puzzled companion, who went with the incomprehensible preacher to Rosneath, confided all his doubts and troubles on this subject to the private ear of a sympathising friend. "Such a sermon would have taken *me* a week to write!" said this bewildered worthy. Possibly a lifetime would have been too short for such a feat, had the good man but known.

Immediately after this leave-taking Irving proceeded to Annan, to his father's house, there to appear once more before the Presbytery and go through his final "trials" for ordination. He chose to have this great solemnity of his life accomplished in the same church in which he had been baptized, and in which a third sad act awaited him. But there was no foreboding in the air of that sweet spring, which he spent in a kind of *retreat* of calm and retirement in his paternal house. The breathing-time which he had there, as well as the hopes and interests which pleasantly agitated it, are

described in a letter addressed to his friend and frequent correspondent, Mr. David Hope.

"Annan, 28th May, 1822.

"I am snugly seated in this Temple of Indolence, and very loath to be invaded by any of the distractions of the busy city. I would fain devote myself to the enjoyment of our home and family, and to meditate from a distance the busy scene I have left, and the more busy scene to which I am bound. My mind seems formed for inactivity. I can saunter the whole day from field to field, riding on impressions and the transient thoughts they awaken, with no companion of books or men, saving, perhaps, a little nephew or niece in my hand.

"You may from this conceive how little disposed I am to take any task in hand of any kind; and I had almost resolved to refuse flatly the flattering requests of my friends to publish that poor discourse; but yesterday there came such a letter from Mr. Collins, full of argument and the kindest encouragement, that I have resolved to comply, and shall signify my resolution to him by this post.

"For the other matter, it gives me the most exquisite delight to think my friends remember me with attachment. That they are about to show it by some testimonial I should perhaps not have known till I received it. It is not my part to make a choice; but if I were to think of anything, it would be that very thing which you mention. But of this say nothing as coming from me."

The matter here referred to was a present which some members of St. John's church were desirous of making him. It was decided that it should be a watch; and I have been told, without, however, being able to vouch for the entire authenticity of the story, that when the matter was entirely decided upon, and the money in hand, Irving was consulted to know whether he had any particular fancy or liking in the matter. He had

one, and that was characteristic. He requested that it should be provided by a certain watchmaker, whose distinguishing quality was not that he was skilful in his trade, but that he was an Annandale man. The good Glasgow donors yielded to this recommendation; and Irving had the double delight of receiving a very substantial proof of his friends' attachment, and of throwing a valuable piece of work in the way of his countryman. Whether the watch itself was the better for the arrangement tradition does not tell.

While the prospect of this tribute, or rather of the affection which it displayed, gave him, as he says, in the fulness of his heart, "exquisite delight," the publication of his sermon was also going on. But the discourse, in which Irving had poured out all the generous exuberance of his feelings, fell into dangerous hands before it reached the public. Mrs. Chalmers laid hold upon the offending manuscript; and without either the consent or knowledge of the writer, cut down its panegyric into more moderate dimensions, —a proceeding which the luckless author, when he came to know of it, resented deeply, as I suspect most authors would be disposed to do. "Returning some months afterwards to Glasgow," says Dr. Hanna, in his *Life of Dr. Chalmers*, "his printed sermon was handed to Mr. Irving, who, on looking over it, broke out into expressions of astonishment and indignation at the liberties which had been taken with his production,—expressions which would have been more measured had he known who the culprit was." Such a meddling with his first publication was enough to try the temper of the meekest of men.

Immediately after his ordination he returned to Glasgow, and there assisted Dr. Chalmers in the solemn and austere pomp—(pomp, not certainly of outward accessories, yet it is the only word by which I can describe the importance given to the half-yearly *occasion*, the "sacramental season" of Scotch piety, separated as it is, by long array of devotional services, from the ordinary course of the year)—of a Scottish communion. Irving himself describes this as "having experienced of my dear friend Dr. Chalmers the singular honour of administering the sacrament to his parish flock, being my first act as an ordained minister." It was a graceful conclusion to his residence in Glasgow. From thence he set out, amid honour and good wishes, with the highest hopes in his mind, and charity in his heart, on the morning of the 8th of July, 1822, to London. The future seems to have glowed before him with all the indefinite brightness of early youth. Certainly that little chapel in London, in those dread wastes about Holborn, far out of hearing of the great world as might have been supposed, with fifty undistinguished members, to their own knowing strenuous, Scotch churchmen, but so far as the great indifferent community about them was concerned, lost in the crowd of Dissenting chapels, nameless and unknown places of worship—had little in itself to lift the anticipations of its minister to any superlative height; nor did he carry with him any comforting consciousness of success; unflattered, undeceived, fully aware and never scrupling to confess that his preaching had hitherto, except in individual cases, been little more than tolerated, it might have been supposed a very homely and sombre per-

spective which opened before this young man. So far as actual realities were concerned, it was so; but the instinct of his heart contradicted reality, and showed, in wonderful indefinite vision, some great thing that was to come. He calls himself "a man unknown, despised, and almost outcast;—a man spoken against, suspected, and avoided;" yet, withal, proceeds to his obscure corner of that great wilderness of men, in which so many men, greater than he could pretend to be, had been swallowed up and lost, with a certain ineffable expectation about him which it is impossible to describe, but which shines through every word and action. He did not foresee how it was to come; he could not have prophesied that all London would stir to the echoes of his voice. All that memorable tragic life that lay solemnly waiting for him among the multitudinous roofs was hid in the haze of an illumination which never takes visible shape or form. But Nature, prevoyant, tingled into his heart an inarticulate thrill of prophecy. He went forth joyfully, wittingly, aware of all the hazards of that battle, into the deepest of the fight—amid all the exaltation of his hopes, never without a touch of forlorn dignity, acknowledged without any bitterness, the consciousness of a man who, however he might triumph hereafter, had known many a defeat already. Thus Irving went out of his youth and obscurity, out of trials and probation not often exceeded, to the solemn field full of lights and shadows greater than he dreamt of, where his course, for a time, was to be that of a conqueror, and where, at last, like other kings and victors before him, he was to fall, dauntless but mortal, with the loss of all save honour.

CHAPTER VII.

LONDON, 1822.

"On the second Sabbath of July, 1822," Irving began his labours in London. The fifty people who had signed his call, with such dependents as might belong to them, and a stray sprinkling of London Scotsmen, curious to hear what their new countryman might have to say for himself, formed all the congregation in the little chapel. The position was not one calculated to excite the holder of it into any flights of ambition, so far as its own qualities went. It was far from the fashionable and influential quarter of the town,—a chapel attached to a charity, and a congregation reduced to the very lowest ebb in point of numbers. Nor did Irving enter upon his career with those aids of private friendship which might make an ordinary man sanguine of increasing his estimation and social sphere. Sir David Wilkie records his belief that the new preacher had introductions only to himself and Sir Peter Lawrie, neither of them likely to do much in the way of opening up London, great, proud, and critical, to the unknown Scotsman; and though this statement may not be entirely correct, yet it is evident that he went with few recommendations, save to the little Scotch community amidst which, as people supposed, he was to live and

labour. There are stories extant among that community still, concerning the early beginnings of his fame, which, after all that has passed since, are sadly amusing and strange, with their dim recognition of some popular qualities in the new minister, and mutual congratulations over a single adherent gained. Attracted by the enthusiastic admiration expressed by a painter almost unknown to fame, of the noble head and bearing of the new comer, another painter was induced to enter the little chapel where the stranger preached his first sermon. When the devotional services were over, —beginning with the Psalm, read out from the pulpit, in a voice so splendid and melodious that the harsh metres took back their original rhythm, and those verses so dear to Scotsmen justified their influence even to more fastidious ears,—the preacher stood up, and read as the text of his sermon the following words:— "Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for. I ask you, therefore, for what intent you have sent for me?" The sermon has not been preserved, so far as I am aware; but the text—remembered as almost all Irving's texts are remembered—conveys all the picturesque reality of the connection thus formed between the preacher and his people, as well as the solemn importance of the conjunction. The listening stranger was of course fascinated, and became not only a member of Mr. Irving's church, but—more faithful to the Church than to the man,—a supporter of the Church of Scotland after she had expelled him.

By gradual degrees the little chapel began to fill. So far as appears, there was nobody of the least distinction connected with the place; and it is hard to

understand how the great world came so much as to hear of the existence of the new popularity. This quiet period, full of deep hopes and pleasant progress, but as yet with none of the high excitement of after days, Irving himself describes in the following letter to his friend, Mr. Graham, of Burnswark:—

"London, 19 Gloucester Street, Queen Square,
"Bloomsbury, 5th August, 1822.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND, — I have not forgot you, and if I wished to forget you I could not, sealed as you are in the midst of my affections, and associated with so many recollections of worth and of enjoyment. You always undervalued yourself, and often made me angry by your remarks upon the nature of our friendship, counting me to gain nothing; whereas I seemed always in your company to be delivered into those happy and healthy states of mind which are in themselves an exquisite reward. To say nothing of your bounty, which shone through all the cloud of misfortune; to say nothing of your tender interest in my future, my friends, my thoughts; and your sleepless endeavour to promote and serve them—I hold your own manly, benignant, and delicate mind to be a sufficient recommendation of you to men of a character and a genius I have no pretensions to. So in our future correspondence be it known to you that we feel and express ourselves as equals, and bring forth our thoughts with the same liberty in which we were wont to express them—which is the soul of all pleasant correspondence.

"You cannot conceive how happy I am here in the possession of my own thoughts, in the liberty of my own conduct, and in the favour of the Lord. The people have received me with open arms; the church is already regularly filled; my preaching, though of the average of an hour and a quarter, listened to with the most serious attention. My mind plentifully endowed with thought and feeling—my life ordered, as God enables me after his holy Word—my store supplied out of His abundant liberality. These are the elements of my happiness, for which I am bound to render unmeasured

thanks. Would all my friends were as mercifully dealt with, and mine enemies too.

"You have much reason for thankfulness that God, in the time of your sore trials, sustained your honour and your trust in Himself: nay, rather made you trust in Him the more He smote you. His time of delivery will come at length, when you shall taste as formerly His goodness, and enjoy it with a chastened joy, which you had not known if you had never been afflicted: persevere, my dear friend, in the ways of godliness and of duty, until the grace of God, which grows in you, come to a full and perfect stature.

"For my thoughts, in which you were wont to take such interest, they have of late turned almost entirely inward upon myself; and I am beginning dimly to discover what a mighty change I have yet to undergo before I be satisfied with myself. I see how much of my mind's very limited powers have been wasted upon thoughts of vanity and pride; how little devoted to the study of truth and excellency upon their own account. As I advance in this self-examination, I see farther, until, in short, this life seems already consumed in endeavours after excellence, and nothing attained; and I long after the world where we shall know as we are known, and be free to follow the course we approve, with an unimpeded foot. At the same time I see a life full of usefulness, and from my fellow-creatures, full of glory, which I regard not; and of all places this is the place for one of my spirit to dwell in. Here there are no limitations to my mind's highest powers; here, whatever schemes are worthy may have audience and examination; here, self-denial may have her perfect work in midst of pleasures, follies, and thriftless employments of one's time and energies. Oh, that God would keep me, refine me, and make me an example to this generation of what His grace can produce upon one of the worst of His children!

"I have got three very good, rather elegant apartments,—a sitting-room, a bed-room, and dressing-room: and when George * comes up, I have one of the attics for his sleeping

* His younger, and then only surviving brother, of whom and of whose education he seems from this time to have taken the entire burden.

apartment. My landlady, as usual, a very worthy woman, and likely to be well content with her lodger. George comes up when the classes sit down, and in the meantime is busy in Dr. Irving's shop. This part of the town is very airy and healthy, close to Russell Square, and not far from the church, and in the midst of my friends. My studies begin after breakfast, and continue without interruption till dinner; and the product, as might be expected, is of a far superior order to what you were pleased to admire in St. John's."

This letter, after salutations as particular and detailed as in an apostolical epistle, ends with the injunction to "tell me a deal about Annandale, Sandy Corne, and all worthy men." His correspondent, like himself, was an Annandale man, a Glasgow merchant, with a little patrimony upon the side of one of those pastoral hills which overlook from a distance Irving's native town, where George, a young medical student, was busy among the drugs in the country doctor's shop; amid all the exultation of his hopes, as well as in the fullest tide of success, his heart was always warm to this "countryside."

About a month later, Dr. Chalmers, then making one of his rapid journeys through England, collecting the statistics of pauperism, came to London for the purpose of "introducing," according to Presbyterian uses and phraseology, though in this case somewhat after date, the young minister to his charge. This simple ceremony, which is entirely one of custom, and not of rule, is generally performed by the most prized friend of the new preacher — who simply officiates for him, and in his sermon takes the opportunity of recommending, in such terms as his friendship suggests, the young pastor to the love and esteem of

his people. Nobody could be better qualified to do this than Irving's master in their common profession; and it is creditable to both parties to note how they mutually sought each other's assistance at such eventful moments of their life. Dr. Chalmers writes to his wife on arriving in London that he found Irving "in good taking with his charge. He speculates as much as before on the modes of preaching; is quite independent with his own people, and has most favourably impressed such men as Zachary Macaulay and Mr. Cunningham with the conception of his talents. He is happy and free, and withal making his way to good acceptance and a very good congregation." Such, as yet, was the modest extent of all prognostications in his favour. The good Doctor goes on to relate how he was delighted to find that Irving had been asked to dine with him in the house of a Bloomsbury M.P.; evidently rejoicing in this opening of good society to his friend and disciple. The two returned together to Irving's lodgings after this dinner, and found there a hospitably-received, but apparently not too congenial guest, "Mr. ——, the singularity of whose manners you were wont to remark, who is his guest at present from Glasgow. This," remarks Dr. Chalmers, "is one fruit of Mr. Irving's free and universal invitation; but I am glad to find that he is quite determined as to visits, and apparently not much annoyed with the intrusion of callers." This is not the only evidence of the imprudent liberality of Irving's farewell invitation to the entire congregation of St. John's. About the same time, to select one instance out of many, a poor man came to him seeking a situation, "a very genteel,

respectable-looking young man," says the compassionate preacher, who refers him, in a letter full of beseeching sympathy, to his universal assistant and resource in all troubles — the good William Hamilton. Such petitioners came in multitudes through all his after-life — receiving sometimes hospitality, sometimes advice — recommendations to other people more likely to help them — kindness always. Such troubles come readily enough of themselves to the clergymen of a popular church ; but the imprudence of inviting them was entirely characteristic of a man who would have served and entertained the entire world, if he could.

The next Sunday, when Dr. Chalmers preached, the little Cross Street church was, of course, crowded. Wilkie, the most tenacious of Scotsmen, had been already led to attendance upon Irving's ministrations, and was there, accompanied by Sir Thomas Lawrence, to hear his still greater countryman. But the brilliant crowd knew nothing yet of the other figure in that pulpit ; and went as it came, a passing meteor. After this, Dr. Chalmers concludes his estimate of his former colleague's condition and prospects in the following words: "Mr. Irving I left at Homerton, and as you are interested in him I may say, once for all, that he is prospering in his new situation, and seems to feel as if in that very station of command and congeniality whereunto you have long known him to aspire. I hope that he will not hurt his usefulness by any kind of eccentricity or imprudence." In these odd and characteristic words Dr. Chalmers, always a little impatient and puzzled even in his kindest moments about a man so undeniably eminent, yet so entirely unlike

himself, dismisses Irving, and proceeds upon his statistical inquiries.

Meanwhile, in this station of "command and congeniality," as Chalmers so oddly terms it, Irving made swift and steady way. Writing at a later period to his congregation, he mentions a year as having passed before the tide of popularity swelled upon them beyond measure; but this must have been a failure of memory, for both the preacher and congregation were much earlier aware of the exceeding commotion and interest awakening around them. He expresses his own consciousness of this very simply in another letter to his friend David Hope.

"19 Gloucester Street, Queen Square,
"5th November, 1822.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—You have too good reason to complain of me, and a thousand more of my Scottish friends; but be not too severe; you shall yet find me in London the same true-hearted fellow you knew me in Glasgow. . . . . But I had another reason for delaying; I wished, when I did write, to be able to recount to you an exact account of my success. Thank God, it seems now beyond a doubt. The church overflows every day, and they already begin to talk of a right good Kirk, worthy of our mother and our native country. But into these vain speculations I have little time to enter, being engrossed with things strictly professional. You are not more regular at the counting-house, nor, I am sure, sooner (*Anglicè* earlier), neither do you labour more industriously, till four chaps from the Ram's Horn Kirk *, than I sit in to this my study, and occupy my mind for the benefit of my flock. The evening brings more engagements with it than I can overtake, and so am I kept incessantly active. My engagements have been increased, of late, by looking out for a house to dwell in. I am resolved to be this Ishmaelite no longer, and

* One of the Glasgow churches, popularly so called.

to have a station of my own upon the face of the earth. So a new year will see me fixed in my own habitation, where there will be ever welcome entertainment for him who was to me for a brother at the time of my sojourning in Glasgow. When I look back upon those happy years, I could almost wish to live them over again, in order to have anew the instances I then received of true brotherly kindness from you and so many of your townsmen.

"You would be overjoyed to hear the delight of our Scottish youth, which they express to me, at being once more gathered together into one, and the glow with which they speak of their recovered habits. This is the beginning, I trust, of good amongst them. So may the Lord grant in His mercy and loving-kindness.

"Now I wish to know about yourself—how all your affairs prosper. . . . . I could speculate much upon the excellent fruit season, and the wretched oil season; but you would laugh at my ignorance. And there is something more valuable to be speculated upon. I do hope you prosper in the one thing needful, under your most valuable pastor; and also my dear friend Graham. Give my love to him, and say I have not found time to answer his letter; but if this thing of settlement were off my mind, I should get into regular ways. Do not punish me, but write me with all our news; and believe me, my dear David,

"Your most affectionate friend,

"EDWARD IRVING."

The immediate origin of Irving's popularity, or rather of the flood of noble and fashionable hearers who poured in upon the little chapel in Hatton Garden all at once, without warning or premonition, is said to have been a speech of Canning's. Sir James Mackintosh had been by some unexpected circumstance led to hear the new preacher, and heard Irving in his prayer describe an unknown family of orphans belonging to the obscure congregation, as now "thrown upon

the fatherhood of God." The words seized upon the mind of the philosopher, and he repeated them to Canning, who "started," as Mackintosh relates, and, expressing great admiration, made an instant engagement to accompany his friend to the Scotch church on the following Sunday. Shortly after, a discussion took place in the House of Commons, in which the revenues of the Church were referred to, and the necessary mercantile relation between high talent and good *pay* insisted upon. No doubt it suited the statesman's purpose to instance, on the other side of the question, the little Caledonian chapel and its new preacher. Canning told the House that, so far from universal was this rule, that he himself had lately heard a Scotch minister, trained in one of the most poorly endowed of churches, and established in one of her outlying dependencies, possessed of no endowment at all, preach the most eloquent sermon that he had ever listened to. The curiosity awakened by this speech is said to have been the first beginning of that invasion of "society" which startled Hatton Garden out of itself.

This first year, however, of his residence in London was so far obscure that he had as yet opened his voice only in the pulpit, and had consequently given the press and its vassals no vantage ground on which to assail him. It is perhaps, with the new publicity which his first publication brought upon him in view, that he reminds his people how "for one year or nearly so, beginning with the second Sabbath of July, 1822, our union went on cementing itself by mutual acts of kindness, in the shade of that happy obscurity which we then enjoyed. And I delight to remember that

season of our early love and confidence, because the noisy tongues of men and their envious eyes were not upon us." With the best will in the world newspapers can take but little notice of a popular preacher, and periodicals of higher rank none at all, so that it was merely private criticism which commented upon the great new voice rising up in the heart of London. Besides the vague general facts of the rapidly raised enthusiasm, of applications for seats in the little Caledonian chapel, which would only accommodate about six hundred people, rising in one quarter to fifteen hundred, and Irving's own simple and gratified intimation that "the church overflows every day," there is very little certain information to be obtained of that first year of his progress in London. *Thirty Sermons*, taken down in shorthand by W. J. Oxford, but published only in 1835, after Irving's death, and forming the second volume of *Irving's Life and Works* — a production evidently got up to catch the market at the moment of his death — contains the only record remaining to us of his early eloquence. Nobody who reads these sermons, imperfect as they must be from the channel through which they come, will wonder at the rising glow of excitement which, when a second year set in, brought all London struggling for places to the little Scotch church, already fully occupied by its own largely increased congregation. They have, it is true, no factitious attractions, and genius, all warm and eloquent, has preached before without such results; but the reader will not fail to see the great charm of the preacher's life and labours already glowing palpable through those early procla-

mations of his message. Heart and soul, body and spirit, the man who speaks comes before us as we read; and I have no doubt that the first thrill of that charm which soon moved all London, and the fascination of which never wholly faded from Irving's impassioned lips, lay in the fact that it was not mere genius or eloquence, great as their magic is, but something infinitely greater — a man, all visible in those hours of revelation, striving mightily with every man he met, in an entire personal unity which is possible to very few, and which never fails, where it appears, to exercise an influence superior to any merely intellectual endowment. Nor is it possible to read the few letters of this period, especially those above quoted, without feeling the deep satisfaction and content which at last possessed him; and the stimulus given to all his faculties by this profound consciousness of having attained the place suitable for him and the work which he could do. A long breath of satisfaction expands the breast which has so often swelled with the wistful sighs of longing and deferred hope. He is the "happy warrior" at length able to work out his life "upon the plan that pleased his youthful thought;" and his descriptions of his studies and the assiduity with which he set to work—his very self-examinations and complaints of his own unworthiness, are penetrated with this sentiment. He stands at the beginning of his career in an attitude almost sublime in its simplicity, looking forward with all the deep eagerness of an ambition which sought not its own advancement — a man to whom God had granted the desire of his heart. Few men consciously understand and

acknowledge the fulness of this blessing, which indeed is not often conferred. Most people, indeed, find the position they had hoped and longed for, to fall far short of their hopes when it is attained. Irving was an exception to this common rule of humanity. He had reached the point to which he had been struggling, and amid all the joyful stir of his faculties to fill his place worthily, he never hesitates nor grudges to make full acknowledgment that he has got his desire. Not merely obedience and loyalty constrain him to the work, but gratitude to that Master who has permitted him to reach the very post of his choice. With a full heart and unhesitating words, and even more by a certain swell of heroic joy and content in everything he does and says, he testifies his thankfulness. It is no longer a man struggling, as most men do, through ungenial circumstances and adverse conditions whom we have to contemplate, but a man consciously and confessedly in the place which his imagination and wishes have long pointed out to him as the most desirable, the most suitable in the world for himself.

With this buoyant and joyful satisfaction, however, no mean motives mingled. Irving's temper was eminently social. He could not live without having people round him to love, and still more to admire and reverence, and even to follow; but no vain desire of "good society" seems to have moved the young Scotchman. He was faithful to Bloomsbury, which his congregation favoured; and when he set up his first household in London, though moving a little out of that most respectable of localities, he went further off instead of nearer the world of fashion, and settled in Myddelton Terrace,

Pentonville. Here he lived in modest economy for some years, prodigal in nothing but charity. The society into which he first glided was still Scotch, even when out of the narrower ecclesiastical boundaries. David Wilkie was one of his earliest friends, and Wilkie brought him in contact with Allan Cunningham, a still closer countryman of his own. Thus he made gradual advances into the friendship and knowledge of the people about him; and with his young brother sharing his lodging and calling out his affectionate cares, with daily studies close and persevering as those he has himself recorded; with the little church Sunday by Sunday overflowing more fully—till accidents began to happen in the narrow streets about Hatton Garden, and at last the concourse had to be regulated by wiles, and the delighted, but embarrassed, managers of the little Caledonian chapel found an amount of occupation thrust upon their hands for which they were totally unprepared, and had to hold the doors of their little building like so many besieged posterns against the assaults of the crowd; and with notable faces appearing daily more frequent in the throng of heads all turned towards the preacher, Edward Irving passed the first year of his life in London, and sprang out of obscurity and failure with a sudden unexampled leap to the giddiest height of popular applause, abuse, and idolatry, bearing the wonderful revolution with a steady but joyful simplicity, recognising his success as openly as he had recognised the want of it, under which he suffered for so many silent years.

CHAPTER VIII.

1823.

THE second year of Irving's residence in London was one of the deepest importance, both to himself personally and to his reputation. It opened with the publication of his first book, the *Orations* and the *Argument for Judgment to come*, both of which had been partly preached in the form of sermons, and were now in an altered shape presented, not to any special religious body, but to the world which had gathered together to hear them, and to those who lead the crowd, the higher intellects and imaginations, whom neither religious books nor discourses usually address. In this volume it is perceptible that the preacher's mind had swelled and risen with the increase of his audience. Something more, it was apparent, was required of him than merely congregational ministrations; and he rises at the call to address those classes of men who are never to be found in numbers in any congregation, but who did drift into *his* audience in unprecedented crowds. In the preface to this publication he explains his own object with noble gravity, claiming for himself, with the most entire justice, though in such a way as naturally to call forth against him the jealous criticism of all self-satisfied preachers, a certain originality in the treatment of his subject, and desiring to be heard not

in the ear of the Church only, but openly, before the greater tribunal of the world. At the height of his early triumph, looking back, he traces, through years of silence, his own steady protest against the ordinary strain of pulpit teaching; and with a startling earnestness—which that long conviction, for which already he had suffered both hardship and injustice, explains and justifies better than anything else can do — declares his knowledge of the great religious difficulty of the time. "It hath appeared to the author of this book," he says, going at once to the heart of the subject, and with characteristic frankness putting that first which was like to be taken most exception to, "from more than ten years' meditation upon the subject, that the chief obstacle to the progress of divine truth over the minds of men, is the want of its being sufficiently presented to them. In this Christian country there are perhaps nine-tenths of every class who know nothing at all about the application and advantages of the single truths of revelation, or of revelation taken as a whole; and what they do not know they cannot be expected to reverence or obey. This ignorance, in both the higher and the lower orders, of religion, as a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart, is not so much due to the want of inquisitiveness on their part, as to the want of a sedulous and skilful ministry on the part of those to whom it is intrusted."

It cannot be surprising that such a beginning aroused at once all the antagonism with which innovations are generally regarded, and provoked those accusations of self-importance, self-exaltation, and vanity, which still are current among those who know nothing of the

person they stigmatise. But not to say that he proves his case, which most unprejudiced readers will allow, nor that the grievance has gone on since his days, growing more and more intolerable, and calling forth many reproofs less serious but more bitter than Irving's, none who have accompanied us so far in this history, and perceived the exercises of patience which the preacher himself had to undergo, and the warm and strong conviction arising out of them which for years had hindered his own advancement, will be surprised at the plain speaking with which he heralds his own first performance. To get at the true way of addressing men, he himself had been for years a wearied listener and discouraged essayist at speech. At last he had found the secret; and the whole world round him had owned with an instantaneous thrill the power that was in it. With this triumphant vindication of his own doubts and dissatisfaction, to confirm him in his views, it was impossible for such a man to be silent on the general question. At this dazzling moment he had access to the highest intelligences in the country,—the teachers, the governors, the authorities of the land, had sought him out in that wilderness of mediocre London, which had not even the antiquity of the city, nor any recommendation whatever, but was lost in the smoke, the dust, the ignoble din and bustle. And why was such an audience unusual? How was it that they were not oftener attracted, seized upon, made to hear God's Word and will, if need, were, in spite of themselves? Thinking it over, he comes to the conclusion, not that his own genius was the cause, but that his brethren had not found the true method, had not learned the

most effective way of discharging their duty. "They prepare for teaching gipsies, for teaching bargemen, for teaching miners, by apprehending their way of conceiving and estimating truth; and why not prepare," he asks, with eloquent wonder, and a truth which nobody can dispute, "for teaching imaginative men, and political men, and legal men, and scientific men, who bear the world in hand?" This preparation, judging from what he saw around him every day, Irving was well justified in believing he himself had attained; and he did not hesitate, while throwing himself boldly forth upon the world in a book—a farther and swifter messenger than any voice—to declare it plainly, the highest reason and excuse for the publication, in which he now, with all the fervour and eloquence of a personal communication, addressed all who had ears to hear.

The preface to the *Orations*, which form the first part of the volume, is so characteristic and noble an expression of friendship, that it would be inexcusable to omit it.

"To the Rev. Thomas Chalmers, D.D.,
"Minister of St. John's Church, Glasgow.

"My honoured Friend,—I thank God, who directed you to hear one of my discourses, when I had made up my mind to leave my native land for solitary travel in foreign parts. That dispensation brought me acquainted with your good and tender-hearted nature, whose splendid accomplishments I knew already; and you now live in the memory of my heart more than in my admiration. While I laboured as your assistant, my labours were never weary, they were never enough to express my thankfulness to God for having associated me with such a man, and my affection to the man with whom I was associated. I now labour in another field,

among a people whom I love, and over whom God hath, by signs unequivocal, already blessed my ministry. You go to labour likewise in another vineyard, where may the Lord bless your retired meditations as he hath blessed your active operations. And may He likewise watch over the flock of our mutual solicitude, now about to fall into other hands. The Lord be with you and your household, and render unto you manifold for the blessings which you have rendered unto me. I could say much about these *Orations* which I dedicate to you, but I will not mingle with any literary or theological discussion this pure tribute of affection and gratitude which I render to you before the world, as I have already done into your private ear. I am, my honoured friend, yours, in the bonds of the gospel, "EDWARD IRVING."

"Caledonian Church, Hatton Garden, July, 1823."

The *Argument for Judgment to come*, a longer and more elaborate work, which occupies the larger half of the same volume, seems to have been specially suggested to the mind of the writer by the two *Visions of Judgment* of Southey and Byron. The profane flattery of the one, most humiliating tribute to both giver and receiver which the office of laureate has, in recent ages at least, extorted from any poet, and the disgusting parody of the other, excited in Irving all the indignation and repugnance which was natural to a right-thinking and pious mind. His feeling on the subject seems warmer than those miserable productions were worthy of exciting; but it is natural that a contemporary should regard such degradations of literature with a livelier indignation than it is possible to feel when natural oblivion has mercifully swallowed them up. The *Argument* was dedicated, like the *Orations*, to one of his earlier friends, the Rev. Robert (afterwards well known as Dr.) Gordon of Edinburgh; this highest

mark of regard or gratitude, which it is in an author's power to bestow, being in both cases characteristically conferred on men who could in no way advance or aid him in his career, but whom he distinguished from pure gratitude and friendship only. Inscribed with these names, he sent his first venture into the yet untried world of literature, exposing himself freely, with all his undeniable peculiarities both of mind and diction, to a flood of critics, probably never, before or since, so universally excited about any volume of religious addresses which ever came from the press.

The consequence was an onslaught so universal, exciting, and animated, that the satire of the day—the age of pamphlets being then in full existence—took hold of the matter, and has preserved, in a curious and amusing form, the comments and ferment of the time. *The Trial of the Rev. Edward Irving, M.A., a Cento of Criticism*, had reached the fifth edition, now before us, in the same year, 1823, which was half over before Irving's book was published. It is the report of a prosecution carried on before the Court of Common Sense, by Jacob Oldstyle, Clerk, against the new preacher, at the trial of which all the editors of the leading papers are examined, cross-examined, and covered with comic confusion. The state of popular interest and excitement suggested by the very possibility of such a production, and the fact of its having run through at least five editions, is of itself almost unbelievable, considering the short period of Irving's stay in London, and his character as a preacher of an obscure, and, so far as the ordinary knowledge of the London public was concerned, almost foreign church. Such a *jeu d'esprit* is a more powerful

witness of the general commotion than any graver testimony. The common public, it appears, were sufficiently interested to enjoy the mock trial, and the discomfiture of able editors consequent upon that examination, and knew the whole matter so thoroughly, that they could appreciate the fun of the travestie. The editor of the *Times* being called, and having in the course of his examination given the court the benefit of hearing his own article on the subject, gives also the following account of the aspect of affairs at the Caledonian chapel:—

"Did you find that your exposure of the defendant's pretensions had the effect of putting an end to the public delusion?"

"Quite the reverse. The crowds which thronged to the Caledonian chapel instantly doubled. The scene which Cross Street, Hatton Garden, presented on the following Sunday beggared all description. It was quite a Vanity Fair. Not one half of the assembled multitude could force their way into the *sanctum sanctorum*. Even we ourselves were shut out among the vulgar herd. For the entertainment of the excluded, however, there was Mr. Basil Montagu preaching peace and resignation from a window; and the once celebrated Romeo Coates acting the part of trumpeter from the steps of the church, extolling Mr. Irving as the prodigy of prodigies, and abusing the *Times* for declaring that Mr. Irving was not the god of their idolatry."

The other witnesses called give corroborative testimony. An overwhelming popularity, which is not to be explained by common rules, is the one thing granted alike by opponents and supporters; and all the weapons of wit are brought forth against a preacher who indeed had offered battle. Nor were the newspapers the only critics; every periodical work of the day seems to

have occupied itself, more or less, with the extraordinary preacher; most of them in the tone, not of literary commentators, but of personal enemies or adherents. The Westminster and Quarterly Reviews brought up the rear; the former (in its first number) referring its readers "for the faults of Mr. Irving, to the thousand-and-one publications in which they have been zealously and carefully set forth," and complaining that it is "compelled to fall on Mr. Irving, when every critical tooth in the nation has been fleshed upon him already." None of these criticisms were entirely favourable; almost all fell heavily upon the phraseology, the grammar, and taste of the orator; and few omitted to notice the imagined "arrogance" of his pretensions. But from the solemn deliverance of the Quarterlies, down to the song of *Doctor Squintum*, with which the truculent gossip of *John Bull* edified his readers, everybody was eager to record their several opinions on a topic so interesting. Such matters were certainly discussed in those days with a degree of personality unknown to our politer fashion of attack; but we cannot remember to have seen or heard of anything like this odd turmoil of universal curiosity and excitement. The counts of the indictment laid against the culprit before the Court of Common Sense will give some idea of the character of the assaults made upon him. They were as follows:—

First. For being ugly.
Second. For being a Merry-Andrew.
Third. For being a common quack.
Fourth. For being a common brawler.
Fifth. For being a common swearer.
Sixth. For being of very common understanding.

And, *Seventh.* For following divisive courses, subversive of the discipline of the order to which he belongs, and contrary to the principles of Christian fellowship and charity.

It will gratify our readers to know that Irving was not found guilty of ugliness, nor of any of the charges brought against him, except the last; and that one of his principal assailants, the *Times* itself, the Thunderer of the day, was convicted by his own confession of having condemned Sir Walter Scott as "a writer of no imagination," and Lord Byron as "destitute of all poetical talent."

Among all his smaller critics, the one personal peculiarity, which impaired the effect of Irving's otherwise fine features and magnificent presence, seems to have always come conveniently to hand to prove his mountebankism and want of genius. When his eloquence could not be decried, his *divided sight* was always open to criticism; and when all harder accusations were expended, his squint made a climax which delighted his assailants. Cockney wit, not much qualified for criticising anything which had to do with the Oracles of God, sang, not with ill-nature, but merely as a relief to the feelings which were incapable of more logical expression, the lively lay of *Doctor Squintum*, which indeed was a harmless effusion of wit, and injured nobody.

It was not only, however, in the legitimate review that this singular book was assailed or recommended. It produced a little attendant literature of its own in the shape of pamphlets, one of which we have already mentioned and quoted from. Another, entitled *An Examination and Defence of the Writings and Preaching*

of the Rev. Edward Irving, A.M., gives the following picture of the man and his church :—

"His mere appearance is such as to excite a high opinion of his intellectual powers. He is, indeed, one of whom the casual observer would say, as he passed him in the street, 'There goes an extraordinary man!' He is in height not less than six feet, and is proportionably strongly built. His every feature seems to be impressed with the characters of unconquerable courage and overpowering intellect. He has a head cast in the best Scottish mould, and ornamented with a profusion of long black curly hair. His forehead is broad, deep, and expansive. His thick, black, projecting eyebrows overhang a very dark, small, and rather deep-set penetrating eye. He has the nose of his nation" (whatever that may happen to be; the essayist does not inform us); "his mouth is beautifully formed, and exceedingly expressive of eloquence. In a word, his countenance is exceedingly picturesque. . . . . Having cleared the way, let us request such of our readers as have not attended the Caledonian church, to repair, at a quarter-past ten o'clock on a Sunday morning, to Cross Street, Hatton Garden, the door of the church of which, if he be a humble pedestrian, he will find it difficult to reach, and when he gets to it he cannot enter without a ticket. If he occupies a carriage, he takes his turn behind other carriages, and is subject to the same routine. Having surmounted these difficulties, should his ticket be numbered he enters the pew so numbered; if not, he waits till after the prayer, or possibly all the time, which is, however, unavoidable. All this adjusted, exactly at eleven o'clock he beholds a tall man, apparently aged about thirty-seven or thirty-eight, with rather handsome but certainly striking features, mount the pulpit stairs. The service commences with a psalm, which he reads; and then a prayer follows in a deep, touching voice. His prayer is impressive and eloquent. The reading of a portion of Scripture follows, in advertence to which we will only say that he *can* read. We haste to the oration, for there the peculiar powers of the preacher are called into play. Having pronounced his text, he commences his subject in a low but very audible voice. The character

of his style will immediately catch the ear of all. Until warmed by his subject, we shall only be struck with a full and scriptural phraseology, in which much modern elision is rejected, some additional conjunction introduced, and the auxiliary verbs kept in most active service. As he goes on his countenance, which is surrounded by a dark apostolic head of hair, waving towards his shoulders, becomes strongly expressive and lighted up, and his gesture marked and vehement."

It is characteristic that nobody attempts to discuss Irving, even in such matters as his books or his sermons, without prefatory personal sketches like the above. Even now, when he has been dead for more than a quarter of a century, his most casual hearer of old times acknowledges the unity of the man by eagerly interpolating personal description into every discussion concerning the great preacher. His person, his aspect, his height, and presence have all a share in his eloquence. There is no dividing him into sections, or making an abstract creature of this living man.

And it should be remembered that the audience admitted after so elaborate a fashion were not the common rabble who surround and follow a popular preacher. His critics made it a strong point against the bold and unhesitating orator, that it was not the poor, but the intelligent, the learned, and the intellectual whom he announced himself intent upon addressing. Virtuous Theodore Hook and other edifying evangelists declared the entry to the Caledonian chapel to be closed to "the pious poor"—a class not much accustomed to such advocates of their claims. "His chapel is every Sunday a gallery of beauty and fashion," says another of his assailants; and persons more important than the fair and fashionable sought the same obscure

place of worship. The effect of such incessant crowding, however agreeable at once to the Christian zeal and national pride of the congregation, was no small trial of their patience and good temper. A year later, when about to lay the foundation of their new church, Irving comments feelingly upon all the inconvenience and discomfort of popularity. "It is not a small matter," he says in one of his sermons, "whether we shall in our new quarters be pressed on by every hindrance to rest and devotion, or shall be delivered into the enjoyment of Sabbath quiet and church tranquillity. We can now look forward to the comfort and quiet which other congregations enjoy, to that simple condition of things which the simplicity of our Church requireth. We have had a most difficult and tedious way to make, through every misrepresentation of vanity and ambition: we have stood in eminent peril from the visits of rank and dignity which have been paid to us. There was much good to be expected from it; therefore we paid willingly the price, *being desirous that they who heard the truth but seldom should hear it when they were disposed.* But these, you know, are bad conditions to our being cemented together as a Church; they withdraw us from ourselves to those conspicuous people by whom we were visited; from which I have not ceased to warn you, and against which I have not ceased to be upon my own guard."

In spite of the universal assaults made against the book, the *Orations* and *Argument* ran into a third edition in little more than as many months; and remain, now that all their critics are forgotten, among the most notable examples of religious eloquence.

But it is not our business to criticise these works, which have been long before the public, and can be still judged on their separate merits. Their author, meanwhile, was approaching a crisis in his life still more important than the publication of his first book. Longer than the patriarch he had waited for his Rachel: and now an engagement, which had lasted, I believe, eleven years, and had survived long separation, and many changes, both of circumstances and sentiment, was at length to be fulfilled. In the end of September, 1823, Irving left London and travelled by several successive stages to Kirkcaldy, where his bride awaited him. He dates the following letter, pleasantly suggestive of the condition of his mind in these new prospects, from Bolton Abbey. It is addressed to William Hamilton.

"MY DEAR AND VALUABLE FRIEND,—I write you thus early by my brother, merely to inform you of my health and happiness; for as yet I have had no time to do anything but walk abroad, among the most beautiful and sequestered scenes with which I am surrounded; and which never fail to produce upon my spirit the most pleasing and profitable effects. When I shall have rested I will write you and my other personal friends at length, and let you know all my plans and purposes during my absence. . . . I shall not write you till I get at my journey's end, and have, perhaps, completed its chief object. But, late though it is, I cannot help telling you how happy I am, and how tranquil and holy a Sabbath I spent yesterday, and how every day I engross into my mind new thoughts, and ruminate upon new designs connected with the ministry of Christ in that great city where I labour. The Lord strengthen me, and raise up others more holy and more devoted for His holy service. I foresee infinite battles and contentions, not with the persons of men, but with

their opinions. My rock of defence is my people. They are also my rock of refuge and consolation. We have joined hands together, and I feel that we will make common cause. I hope the Lord will be pleased to give me their souls and their fervent prayers, and then, indeed, we shall be mighty against all opposition.

"Will you be so good as to give my brother an order upon my account for whatever cash he may need to enter himself to the hospitals with, or, if it is more orderly, to give it him yourself, and consider this as your voucher should anything happen to me before we meet? I should be happy to hear from you that all things are going on well.

"Yours most affectionately,

"EDWARD IRVING.

"29th September, 1823."

After this he passed on his way, by his father's house in Annan; and the Sunday before his marriage, being now no longer a private man, with his time at his own disposal, went to Haddington to preach among his early friends. There, where he had made his youthful beginning in life, and where, when a probationer, he had preached with the ordinary result of half-contemptuous toleration, his coming now stirred all the little town into excitement. The boys who had been his pupils were now men, proud to recall themselves to his notice; and with a warmer thrill of local pride, in recollection of his temporary connection with their burgh, the people of Haddington welcomed the man whom great London had discovered to be the greatest orator of his day. Wherever he went, indeed, he was hailed with that true Scottish approbation and delight which always hails the return of a man who has done his duty by Scotland, and made himself famous — a satisfaction no way lessened by the recol-

lection that Scotland herself had not been the first to discover his great qualities.

"Irving is in Scotland," writes Dr. Gordon from Edinburgh to Irving's friend, Mr. Story. "I have seen him twice for a little. The same noble fellow — and in spite of all his *alleged* egotism, a man of great simplicity and straightforwardness. He is to be married to-day, I believe, to Miss Martin, of Kirkcaldy." This was on the 13th of October. The long-engaged couple were married in that Manse of Kirkcaldy which had witnessed so many youthful chapters in Irving's life, and which was yet more to be associated with his deepest and most tender feelings. They were married by the grandfather of the bride, a venerable old man— brother, as I believe has been already mentioned, of the celebrated Scotch painter, David Martin, whom the imagination of Scotland fondly holds as a second Reynolds— and in his own person a man much venerated, the father of the clergy in his locality; in the presence of a body of kindred worthy of a family in which three generations flourished together. I will not linger upon any description of Irving's wife. The character of a woman who has never voluntarily brought herself before the public is sacred to her children and her friends. She stood by her husband bravely through every after vicissitude of his life: was so thorough a companion to him, that he confided to her, in detail, all the thoughts which occupied him, as will be seen in after letters; received his entire trust and confidence, piously laid him in his grave, brought up his children, and lived for half of her life a widow indeed, in the exercise of all womanly and Christian virtues. If her admiration for his genius,

and the short-sightedness of love, led her rather to seek the society of those who held him in a kind of idolatry, than of friends more likely to exert upon him the beneficial influence of equals, and so contributed to the clouding of his genius, it is the only blame that has been ever attached to her. She came of a family who were all distinguished by active talent and considerable character; and with all the unnoted valour of a true woman, held on her way through the manifold agonies — in her case most sharp and often repeated — of life.

After this event a period of wandering followed, to refresh the fatigue of the preacher, after his first year-long conflict with that life of London which, sooner or later, kills almost all its combatants. The bridal pair appear in glimpses over the summer country. One evening, sitting at the window of his quiet manse, at the mouth of one of the loveliest and softest lochs of Clyde, the minister of Rosneath saw a vast figure approaching through the twilight, carrying — an adjunct which seems to have secured immediate recognition — a portmanteau on its Herculean shoulder. It was Irving, followed by his amused and admiring wife, who had come down from Glasgow by one of the Clyde steamers, and had walked with his burden from the other side of the little peninsula. "And do you mean to say that you have carried *that* all the way?" cried the astonished host, as he hastened to welcome his unexpected visitors. "And I would like to know," answered the bridegroom, with all the gleeful consciousness of strength, stretching out the mighty arms which he had just relieved, "which of your caitiffs could have carried it better!" A little later the pair are at Annan, awaken-

ing in the hearts of young nephews and nieces there their earliest recollections of pleasure and jubilee. Irving was not preaching, so far as there is any record; he was idling and enjoying himself; and, with him, these words meant making others enjoy themselves, and leaving echoes of holiday everywhere. So late as the beginning of November he was still in Scotland — in Glasgow,—where Dr. Chalmers, at the height of his splendid social experiments, and in full possession of his unrivalled influence, a kind of prince-bishop in that great and difficult town, had felt his strength fail, and—yielding to a natural distaste for the atmosphere in which, not following his own inclinations, except in the fashion of his work, he had laboured for years—had resigned his great position for the modest tranquillity of a professor's chair in St. Andrew's, and was just taking leave of the people over whom he had held so wonderful a sway. There Irving went to listen to the last sermon of his master in the ministry. The situation is a remarkable one. He was again to take part in the services in that place where he had filled, loyally, yet with many commotions and wistful dissatisfaction in his mind, a secondary place, so short a time before. A world of difference lay in the year of time which had passed since then. Chalmers himself had not turned the head of any community, as his former assistant had turned the multitudinous heads of London. The man who had gone away from them, forlorn and brave, upon an expedition more like that of a forlorn hope than an enterprise justified by ordinary wisdom, had come back with all the laurels of sudden fame, a conqueror and hero. Yet here,

again he stood, so entirely in his old place that one can suppose the brilliant interval must have looked like a dream to Irving as he gazed upon the crowd of familiar faces, and saw himself lost and forgotten, as of old, in the absorbing interest with which everybody turned to the great leader, under whom they had lived and laboured. Had he been the egotist he was called, or had he come in any vain-glorious hope of confounding those who did not discover his greatness, he would have chosen another moment to visit Glasgow. But he came in the simplicity of his heart to stand by his friend at a solemn moment, as his friend had stood by him; to hear the last sermon, and offer the last good wishes.

This momentary conjunction of these two remarkable men makes a picture pleasant to dwell on. Both had now separated their names from that busy place; the elder and greater to retire into the noiseless seclusion, or rather into the little social "circles" and coteries of a limited society, and the class-rooms of a science that was not even theological; the younger, the secondary and overlooked, to a position much more in the eye of the world, more dazzling, giddy, and glorious than the pulpit of St. John's, even while Chalmers occupied it, could ever have been. At this last farewell moment they stood as if that year, so wonderful to one of them, had never been; and Irving, like a true man, stepped back out of his elevation, and took loyally his old secondary place. "When Dr. Chalmers left the pulpit, after preaching his farewell sermon," says Dr. Hanna, his biographer, "it was entered by the Rev. Edward Irving, who invited the vast

congregation to accompany him, as with solemn pomp and impressive unction he poured out a prayer for that honoured minister of God who had just retired from among them." This momentary appearance in that familiar pulpit, not to display the eloquence which had made him famous since he last stood in it, but simply to crown with prayers and blessings the farewell of his friend, is the most graceful and touching conclusion which could have been given to Irving's connection with Glasgow; or at least—since after events have linked his memory for ever with that of this great and wealthy town—with the congregation of St. John's.

The newly-married pair travelled to London by the paternal house in Annan. Accompanied by some of their relations from thence, they posted to Carlisle, the modern conveniences of travel being then undreamt of. When they were about to cross the Sark, the little stream which at that point divides Scotland from England, Irving, with a pleasant bridegroom fancy, made his young wife alight and walk over the bridge into the new country, which henceforward was to be her home. So this idyllic journey comes to an end. After the bridge of Sark and its moorland landscape, we see no more of the travellers till they reappear in the bustle of London, where idylls have no existence.

His marriage leisure had probably been prolonged in consequence of his health having suffered a little from the great labours and excitement of the past year. Just before starting for Scotland, he had written to this purport to his friend David Hope, who had consulted him what memorial should be raised to their old

schoolmaster, Adam Hope, the master of Annan Academy. He writes:—

"I have been unwell, and living in the country, and not able to attend to your request, but I propose that we should erect a monument, when I will myself compose elegies in the various tongues our dear and venerable preceptor taught,—all which I shall concoct with you when I come to Scotland. Tell Graham, and all my friends," he adds, "if they knew what a battle I am fighting for the cause, and what a single-handed contest I have to maintain, they would forgive my apparent neglect. Every day is to me a day of severe occupation—I have no idleness. All my leisure is refreshment for new labour. Yet am I happy, and now, thank God, well—and this moment I snatch it in the midst of study."

His marriage and its attendant travels happily interrupted this over-occupation, and he seems to have returned to London with new fire, ready to re-enter the lists, and show no mercy upon the assailants who had now made him for several months a mark for all their arrows. He took his bride to the home which had been for some time prepared for her, and which, for the information of the curious, was No. 7 in Myddelton Terrace, Pentonville.

His first occupation—or at least one of the first things which occupied him after his return—must have been the third edition of his *Orations* and *Argument*, with the characteristic preface which he prefixed to it. The critics who assailed him must have been pretty well aware beforehand, from all he had said and written, that Irving was not a man to be overawed by any strictures that could be made upon him. When in the heat and haste of the moment, one edition pursuing another through the press, and one blow after another

ringing on his shield, the orator seized his flaming pen and wrote defiance to all his opponents, it is not difficult to imagine the kind of production which must have flashed from that pen of Irving. Allowing that an author's reply to criticism is always a mistaken and imprudent proceeding, and that Irving's contempt and defiance are not written in perfect *taste* (angry as the expression would have made him) or charity, yet we should have been sorry not to have had the daring onslaught upon these troublesome skirmishers of literature, from whose stings, alas, neither greatness nor smallness can defend the unfortunate wayfarer; and the dignified vindication of his own style and diction, which is as noble and modest a profession of literary allegiance as can be found anywhere. "I have been accused of affecting the antiquated manner of ages and times now forgotten," he says in his defence. "The writers of those times are too much forgotten, I lament, and their style of writing hath fallen out of use; but the time is fast approaching when this stigma shall be wiped away from our prose, as it is fast departing from our poetry. I fear not to confess that Hooke and Taylor and Baxter, in Theology; Bacon and Newton and Locke, in Philosophy, have been my companions, as Shakspeare and Spenser and Milton have been in poetry. I cannot learn to think as they have done, which is the gift of God: but I can teach myself to think as disinterestedly, and to express as honestly, what I think and feel. Which I have, in the strength of God, endeavoured to do." What he said of his critics is naturally much less dignified; but in spite of a few epithets, which were much more current in those days than now, the whole of this preface, much

unlike ordinary prefaces, which authors go on writing with an amazing innocent faith in the attention of the public, and which few people ever dream of looking at, is one of the most eloquent and characteristic portions of the volume. Indeed, I know scarcely any volume of Irving's works of which this might not be said. In his dedications and prefaces, he carries on a kind of rapid autobiography, and takes his reader into his heart and confidence, in those singular addresses, in a manner, so far as I am aware, quite unprecedented in literature.

He was now fully launched upon the exciting and rapid course of London life — a life which permits little leisure and less tranquillity to those embarked upon it. One of his earliest acquaintances was Mr. Basil Montagu — the gentleman described by the *Times* as "preaching peace and resignation from a window" to the disappointed multitude who could find no entrance into the Caledonian church. In Mr. Montagu's hospitable house Irving found the kindest reception and the most congenial society; and even more than these, found consolation and guidance, when first excited and then disgusted, according to a very natural and oft-repeated process, with the blandishments of society, and the coldness of those religious circles which admit nobody who does not come with certificates of theological soundness and propriety in his hand. In dedicating a volume of sermons to Mr. Montagu and his wife, some years after, he thus describes his state and circumstances in his first encounter with that wonderful Circe, from whose fascinations few men escape unharmed :—

"When the Lord, to serve his own ends, advanced me, from the knowledge of my own flock and the private walks of pastoral duty, to become a preacher of righteousness to this great city, and I may say kingdom,—to the princes, and the nobles, and the counsellors of this great empire, whom He brought to hear me,—I became also an object of attack to the malice and artifice of Satan, being tempted on the one hand to murmur because of the distance at which I was held from the affections of my evangelical brethren, whom I had never persecuted like Saul of Tarsus, but too much loved, even to idolatry; and on the other hand being tempted to go forth, in the earnest simplicity of my heart, into those high and noble circles of society which were then open to me, and which must either have engulfed me by their enormous attractions, or else repelled my simple affections, shattered and befooled, to become the mockery and contempt of every envious and disappointed railer. At such a perilous moment the Lord in you found for me a Mentor, both to soothe my heart, vexed with cold and uncharitable suspicions, and to preserve my feet from the snares that were around my path. . . . And seeing it hath pleased God to make your acquaintance first, and then your unwearied and disinterested kindness, and now, I trust, your true friendship, most helpful to my weakness, as well in leading me to observe more diligently the forms and aspects of human life, and to comprehend more widely the ways of God's providence with men, as in sustaining me with your good counsel and sweet fellowship against the cold dislike and uncharitable suspicion of the religious, and preserving me from the snares of the irreligious world, I do feel it incumbent upon me, as a duty to God, and pleasant to me as a testimony of gratitude and love to you, to prefix your honoured names to this Discourse, which chiefly concerneth the intermediate question of the soil on which the seed of truth is sown, wherein I feel that your intercourse has been especially profitable to my mind. For while I must ever confess myself to be more beholden to our sage friend, Mr. Coleridge (whose acquaintance and friendship I owe likewise to you), than to all men besides, for the knowledge of the truth itself as it is in Jesus, I freely confess myself to be much your debtor for the knowledge

of those forms of the natural mind and of the actual existing world with which the minister of truth hath in the first instance to do, and into the soil of which the seed of truth is to be cast. Your much acquaintance, worthy sir, and your much conversation of the sages of other days, and especially the fathers of the English Church and literature, and your endeavours to hold them up unto all whom you honour with your confidence; your exquisite feeling, dear and honoured Madam, of whatever is just and beautiful, whether in the idea or in the truth of things, and your faithfulness in holding it up to the view of your friends, together with the delicate skill and consummate grace with which you express it in words and embody it in acts,—these things, my dear and honoured friends, working insensibly during several years' continuance of a very intimate friendship and very confidential interchange of thought and feeling, have, I perceive, produced in me many of those views of men and things which are expressed in the following Discourse, concerning that question of the several soils into which the seed of truth is cast — a question which I confess that I had very much in time past overlooked."

I make this long and interesting extract out of its chronological place, as the best means I have of showing at once the temper of Irving's mind and the circumstances in which he stood at his outset in London; — on one side, religious people, shy of him at first, as of a man who used a freedom in speech and in thought unknown to ordinary preachers, or authors of published sermons — and afterwards affronted and angry at his bold, simple-minded declaration that they had lost or forgotten the way to proclaim the truth they held; and, on the other, society of a more dazzling kind and with profounder attractions than any he had yet met with — society such that men of genius continually lose their head, and sometimes break their heart in seeking it.

The position in which he thus found himself was, indeed, enough to confuse a man always eager for love and friendship, and ready to trust all the world. Irving, fresh from the simpler circumstances of life in Scotland, charmed with that subtle atmosphere of refinement and high breeding which seems at the first breath to the uninstructed genius the very embodiment of his dreams, stood upon that dangerous point between, repelled from one side, attracted to the other, understanding neither thoroughly — wavering and doubtful at the edge of the precipice. That he had a friend qualified to point out to him the danger on both sides, and that he was wise enough to accept that teaching, was a matter for which he might well be grateful. Mr. Montagu drew him to his own house, brought him into a circle above fashion, yet without its dangerous seductions, introduced him to Coleridge and many other notable men. And Irving, brought into the warm and affectionate intercourse of such a household, and assisted, moreover, by that *glamour* which always remained in his own eyes and elevated everything he saw, learned to gain that acquaintance with men — men of the highest type — men of a class with which hitherto he had been unfamiliar, in which the hereditary culture of generations had culminated, and which, full of thought and ripened knowledge, was not to be moved by generalities—which he could not have learned either in his secondary rank of scholarship in Edinburgh, nor among the merchants of Glasgow. He saw, but in the best and most advantageous way, what every thoughtful mind, which lives long enough, is brought to see something of— how deeply nature has to do with all the revolutions of

the soul; how men are of an individuality all unthought of; and how mighty an agent, beyond all mights of education or training, is constitutional character. In Mr. Montagu's house he saw "the soil" in many a rich and fruitful variation, and came to know how, by the most diverse and different paths, the same end may be attained. If his natural impatience of everything contracted, mean, and narrow-minded gained force in this society, it is not a surprising result. But he had always been sufficiently ready to contemn and scorn commonplace boundaries. His friends in Bedford Square, and their friends, taught him to appreciate more thoroughly the unities and diversities of man.

Scarcely any record remains of the intercourse which existed between Irving and Coleridge, an intercourse which was begun, as has just been seen, by Mr. Montagu. It lasted for years, and was full of kindness on the part of the philosopher, and of reverential respect on that of Irving, who, following the natural instinct of his own ingenuous nature, changed in an instant, in such a presence, from the orator who, speaking in God's name, assumed a certain austere pomp of position—more like an authoritative priest than a simple Presbyter—into the simple and candid listener, more ready to learn than he was to teach, and to consider the thoughts of another than to propound his own. Nothing, indeed, can be more remarkable, more unlike the opinion many people have formed of him, or more true to his real character, than the fact, very clearly revealed by all the dedicatory addresses to which we have referred, that in his own consciousness he was always learning; and not only so, but with the

utmost simplicity and frankness acknowledging what he had learned. If imagination had anything to do with this serious and sad history, it would not be difficult to picture those two figures, so wonderfully different, looking down from the soft Highgate slopes upon that uneasy world beneath, which, to one of them, was but a great field of study, proving, as never any collection of human creatures proved before, all the grievous but great conclusions of philosophy; while to the other, it raged with all the incessant conflict of a field of battle, dread agony of life and death, through which his own cry "to the rescue!" was continually ringing, and his own hand snatching forth from under trampling feet the wounded and the fallen. Here Irving changed the common superficial idea of the world's conversion — that belief calmly held or earnestly insisted on in the face of acknowledged disappointment in many missionary efforts, and the slowness and lingering issues of even the most successful, which is common to most churches. "That error," as he himself says, "under which almost the whole of the Church is lying, that the present world is to be converted unto the Lord, and so slide by a natural inclination into the Church — the present reign of Satan hastening, of its own accord, into the millennial reign of Christ." For this doctrine he learned to substitute the idea of a dispensation drawing towards its close, and — its natural consequence in a mind so full of love to God and man — of an altogether glorious and overwhelming revolution yet to come, in which all the dead society, churches, kingdoms, fashions of this world, galvanically kept in motion until the end, should be

finally burned up and destroyed. Whether this development of wistful and anxious faith, and the "deliverance" conveyed by it; or whether that more subtle view of the ancient and much-assailed Calvinistic doctrine of election, which sets forth God's message and messengers as specially addressed to "the worthy," and universally received by them wherever the message is heard—was the substance of what the preacher learned from the poet-philosopher, there is no information. The prodigal thanks with which the teaching was received, given out of the fulness of a heart always ready to exaggerate the benefits conferred upon it, is almost the only distinct record of what passed between them.

Such was his society and occupations when he returned with the companion of his life from Scotland. He brought his wife into a house in which the tumult of London was perpetually heard; not into a quiet ecclesiastical society, like that which generally falls to the lot of the wives of Scotch ministers, but to a much-disturbed dwelling-place, constantly assailed by visitors, and invaded by agitations of the world. Among all the other excitements of popularity, there came also the pleasant excitement of a new church about to be built, of size proportioned to the necessities of the case. The same crowds and commotion still surrounded the Caledonian chapel, but they became more bearable in the prospect of more roomy quarters. An unfailing succession of private as well as public calls upon the kindness, help, and hospitality of a man whom everybody believed in, and who proffered kindness to all, helped to increase the incessant motion and activity of that full and unresting life. Thus within eighteen months after

his arrival in London had the Scotch preacher won the friendship of many, not specially open to members of his profession and church, and made himself a centre of personal beneficences not to be counted. If ever pride can be justified, Edward Irving might have been justified in a passing thrill of that exultation when he brought his wife from the quiet manse which all along had looked on and watched his career, not sure how far its daughter's future was safe in the hands of a man so often foiled, yet so unsubduable, to place her in a position and society which few clergymen of his church have ever attained, and indeed which few men in any church, however titled or dignified, could equal. The peculiarity of his position lay in the fact that this singular elevation belonged to himself, and not to his rank, which was not susceptible of change. That his influence was extended a thousand-fold, with little addition to his means, and none to his station, and that while he moved among men of the highest intellect and position, neither his transcendent popularity nor his acknowledged genius ever changed that primitive standing-ground of priest and pastor which he always held with primitive tenacity. The charm of that conjunction is one which the most worldly mind of man cannot refuse to appreciate; and perhaps it is only on the members of a church which owns no possibility of promotion, that such a delicate and visionary though real rank could by common verdict be bestowed.

CHAPTER IX.

1824.

The year 1824 began with no diminution of those incessant labours. It is wonderful how a man of so great a frame, and of out-of-door tendencies so strong and long cherished, should have been able to bear, as Irving did, confinement in one of the most town-like and closely-inhabited regions of London. In Pentonville, indeed, faint breaths of country air might at that period be supposed to breathe along the tidy, genteel streets; but in Bloomsbury, where many of Irving's friends resided, or in the dusty ranges of Holborn, where his church was, no such refreshment can have been practicable. Nor had the Presbyterian minister any relief from curates, or assistance of any kind. His entire pulpit services—and, according to his own confession, his sermons averaged an hour and a quarter in length—his prayers, as much exercises of the intellect as of the heart, came from his own lips and mind, unaided by the intervention of any other man; and besides his literary labours, and the incessant demands which his great reputation brought upon him, he had all the pastoral cares of his own large congregation to attend to, and was ready at the call of the sick, the friendless, and the stranger, whensoever they addressed him. That

this overwhelming amount of work, combined as it was with all the excitement inseparable from the position of a popular preacher — a preacher so popular as to have his church besieged every day it was opened —should tell upon his strength, was to be expected; and accordingly we find him writing in the following terms to Mr. Collins of Glasgow, the publisher, who had taken a large share in Dr. Chalmers's parochial work in St. John's, and was one of Irving's steady friends. Some time before he had undertaken to write a preface to a new edition of the works of Bernard Gilpin, which is the matter referred to:—

"7 Middleton Terrace, 24th February, 1824.

'My dear Mr. Collins,—I pray you not for a moment to imagine that I have any other intention, so long as God gives me strength, than to fulfil my promise faithfully. I am at present worked beyond my strength, and you know that is not inconsiderable. My head! my head! I may say with the Shunamite's child. If I care not for it, the world will soon cease to care for me and I for the world. If you saw me many a night unable to pray with my wife, and forced to have recourse to forms of prayer, you would at once discover what hath caused my delay. I have no resource if I throw myself up, and a thousand enemies wait for my stumbling and fall.

"I am now better, and this week had set to rise at six o'clock and finish it, but I have not been able. Next week I shall make the attempt again and again, till I succeed; for upon no account, and for no sake, will I touch or undertake aught until I have fulfilled my promise in respect to Gilpin. But one thing I will say, that I must not be content with the preface of a sermon or patches of a sermon. The subject is too important—too many eyes are upon me—and the interests of religion are too much inwarped in certain places with my character and writing, that I should not do my best.

"The Lord bless you and all his true servants.

"Your faithful friend,

"Edward Irving."

This conscientious determination to do nothing imperfectly is, amid all the exaltation and excitement of Irving's position, no small testimony to his steadiness and devout modesty. Adulation had not been able to convince him that his name was sufficient to give credit to careless writing, nor had the vehement and glowing genius, now fully enfranchised and acknowledged, learned to consider itself independent of industry and painstaking labours. He had learned what criticism awaited everything he wrote; and even while he retaliated manfully, was doubtless warned in minor matters by the storm just then passing over, which had been raised by his former publication.

His next point of contact with the astonished and critical world, which watched for a false step on his part, and was ready to pounce upon anything, from an imperfect or complicated metaphor to an unsound doctrine, occurred in the May of this year, when he had been selected to preach one of the anniversary sermons of the London Missionary Society. The invitation to do this was presumed to be a compliment to Irving, and voucher of his popularity, as well as a prudent enlistment of the "highest talent," to give attraction to the yearly solemnity of the Society. Had the London committee been wise they would scarcely have chosen so daring and original an orator to celebrate their anniversary; since Irving was exactly the man whose opinions or sentiments on such a topic were not to be rashly predicated. The preliminaries of this discourse, as afterwards described by himself, were not such as generally usher in a missionary sermon. Instead of reading up the records of the society, and making care-

ful note of the causes for congratulation and humility, as it would have been correct to have done—instead of laying up materials for a glowing account of its progress and panegyric upon its missionaries, Irving's preparations ran in the following extraordinary channel:—

"Having been requested by the London Missionary Society," he writes, "to preach upon the occasion of their last anniversary, I willingly complied, without much thought of what I was undertaking; but when I came to reflect upon the sacredness and importance of the cause given into my hands, and the dignity of the audience before which I had to discourse, it seemed to my conscience that I had undertaken a duty full of peril and responsibility, for which I ought to prepare myself with every preparation of the mind and of the spirit. To this end, retiring into the quiet and peaceful country, among a society of men devoted to every good and charitable work, I searched the Scriptures in secret; and in their pious companies conversed of the convictions which were secretly brought to my mind concerning the missionary work. And thus, not without much prayer to God and self-devotion, I meditated those things which I delivered in public before the reverend and pious men who had honoured me with so great a trust."

It may easily be supposed that a discourse, thus premeditated and composed by a man whose youth was full of missionary projects, such as no practical nineteenth century judgment could designate otherwise than as the wildest romance, was not likely to come to such a sermon as should content the London or any other Missionary Society. It was not an exposition of the character of a missionary, as apprehended by an heroic mind, capable of the labours it described, which had been either wished or requested. But the directors of the Society, having rashly tackled with a man occupied, not with their most laudable pursuits and interests, but

with the abstract truth, had to pay the inevitable penalty. The day came. In preparation for a great audience the chapel in Tottenham Court Road, once known as the Tabernacle, and built for Whitfield, was selected. The day was wet and dreary, but the immense building was crowded long before the hour of meeting, many finding it impossible to get admittance. So early was the congregation assembled, that to keep so vast a throng occupied, the officials considered it wise to begin the preliminary services a full hour before the time appointed. When the preacher appeared at last, his discourse was so long that he had to pause, according to the primitive custom of Scotland, twice during its course, the congregation in the intervals singing some verses of a hymn. One of the hearers on that occasion tells that, for three hours and a half, he, only a youth, and though a fervent admirer of the orator, still susceptible to fatigue, sat jammed in and helpless near the pulpit, unable to extricate himself. All this might have but added to the triumph; and even so early in his career it seems to have been understood of Irving, that the necessity of coming to an end did not occur to him, and that not the hour, but the subject, timed his addresses, so that his audience were partly warned of what they had to look for. But the oration which burst upon their astonished ears was quite a different matter. It had no connection with the London Missionary Society. It was the ideal missionary —the Apostle lost behind the veil of centuries—the Evangelist, commissioned of God, who had risen out of Scripture and the primeval ages upon the gaze of the preacher. He discoursed to the startled throng,

met there to be asked for subscriptions—to have their interest stimulated in the regulations of the committee, and their eyes directed towards its worthy and respectable representatives, each drawing a little congregation about him in some corner of the earth—of a man without staff or scrip, without banker or provision, abiding with whomsoever would receive him, speaking in haste his burning message, pressing on without pause or rest through the world that lay in wickedness—an Apostle responsible to no man—a messenger of the cross. The intense reality natural to one who had all but embraced that austere martyr vocation in his own person, gave force to the picture he drew. There can be little doubt that it was foolishness to most of his hearers, and that, after the fascination of his eloquence was over, nine-tenths of them would recollect, with utter wonder, or even with possible contempt, that wildest visionary conception. But that it was true for him, nobody, I think, who has followed his course thus far, will be disposed either to doubt or to deny.

The wildest hubbub rose, as was natural, after this extraordinary utterance. It would not have been wonderful if the irritated London Society, balked at once of its triumph, and the advantage to be derived from a wise advocacy of its cause, had set down this unlooked-for address as a direct piece of antagonism and premeditated injury. I am not aware that anybody ever did so; but I allow that it might have been alleged with some show of justice. To judge of Irving's course on this occasion by mere ordinary laws of human action, it would not be very difficult to make out that somehow, piqued or affronted by the Society,

or at least disapproving of it while pretending to serve it, he had taken opportunity of the occasion, and done his best to place it in a false position before its friends and supporters. The fact was as different as can well be conceived. Resolute to give them of his best, as he himself describes, and judging the "reverend and pious men" whom he was about to address, as free to follow out the truth as himself, the conscientious, simple-minded preacher went down to the depths of his subject, and, all forgetful of committees and rules of "practical usefulness," set before them the impossible missionary—the man not trained in any college or by any method yet invented—the man the speaker himself could and would have been, but for what he considered the interposition of Providence. The amazed and doubtful silence, the unwilling fascination with which they must have listened through these inevitable hours to that visionary in his visionary description—watching in impatience and helpless indignation while the wild but sublime picture of a man who certainly could not be identified among their own excellent but unsublime messengers, rose before the multitudinous audience in which, a little while before, official eyes must have rejoiced over a host of new subscribers,—all, alas! melting away under the eloquence of this splendid Malaprop,—may be easily imagined. One can fancy what a relief the end of this discourse must have been to the pent-up wrath and dismay of the missionary committee; and indeed it is impossible not to sympathize with them in their unlooked-for discomfiture.

In the meantime, preoccupied and lost in the contemplation of that most true, yet most impossible ser-

vant of God, whom he had evoked from the past and the future to which all things are possible, Irving, all unaware of the commotion he had caused, went on his way, not dreaming that anybody could suppose the present machinery and economics of common-place missionary work injured by that high vision of the perfection of a character which has been, and which yet may be again. He says, he "was prepared to resist any application which might possibly be made to me" to publish his sermon; an entirely unnecessary precaution, since the complacency of the London Society evidently did not carry them the length of paying the preacher of so unwelcome an address that customary compliment. But in the commotion that followed—in the vexation and wrath of "the religious world," and the astonished outcry of everybody connected with missions, the preacher, not less astonished than themselves, discovered that his doctrine was new, and unwelcome to the reverend and pious men for whose hearing he had so carefully prepared it. When he heard his high conception of the missionary character denounced as an ill-timed rhetorical display—and that which he had devoutly drawn from the only inspired picture of such messengers characterised as not only visionary and wild, but an implied libel upon their present representatives, his sincere heart was roused and startled. He went back to his New Testament, the only store of information he knew of. He drew forth Paul and Barnabas, Peter and John, first missionaries, apostles sent of God. The longer he pondered over them the more his picture rose and expanded. Was not the errand the same, the promise of God the same?—and why should the

character of the individual be so different? The natural result followed: confirmed by further examination, and strengthened by opposition, the sermon enlarged, and grew into an appeal to the world. Pity, always one of the strongest principles in his soul, came in to quicken his action. A missionary in Demerara, who had apostolically occupied himself in the instruction of slaves, had been arrested by an arbitrary planter-legislation, upon some outbreak of the negroes, on the false and cruel charge of having incited them to insurrection, and had been actually, by Englishmen, found guilty, and sentenced to death in consequence. The sentence was not carried out, fortunately for those who pronounced it; but the unfortunate missionary, already ill, and savagely incarcerated, died a martyr to the cruelty which had not yet dared to bring him to the scaffold. The case, an ugly precedent to other cases in another country, which we find ourselves now at full liberty to stigmatise as they deserve, awoke the horror and compassion of England; and when the forlorn widow returned home, Irving, eager to show his sympathy and compassion, and finding the name of a missionary martyr most fit to be connected with his picture of the missionary character, came once more before the world with the obnoxious discourse, which his first hearers had not asked him to print.

"Being unable in any other way," he says, "to testify my sense of his injuries, and my feeling of the duty of the Christian Church to support his widow, I resolved that I would do so by devoting to her use this fruit of my heart and spirit. Thus moved, I gave notice that I would publish the discourse, and give the proceeds of the sale into her hands. When again I came to meditate upon this second engagement which

I had come under, and took into consideration the novelty of the doctrine which I was about to promulgate, I set myself to examine the whole subject anew, and opened my ear to every objection which I could hear from any quarter, nothing repelled by the uncharitable constructions and ridiculous account which was often rendered of my views; the effect of which was, to convince me that the doctrine which I had advanced was true, but of so novel and unpalatable a character, that if it was to do any good, or even to live, it must be brought before the public with a more minute investigation of the Scriptures, and fuller development of reason, than could be contained within the compass of a single discourse. To give it this more convincing and more living form was the occupation of my little leisure from pastoral and ministerial duties, rendered still less during the summer months by the indifference of my bodily health; and it was not until the few weeks of rest and recreation which I enjoyed in the autumn that I was able to perceive the true form and full extent of the argument which is necessary to make good my position."

As this is the first point upon which Irving fairly parted company with his evangelical brethren, and exasperated that large, active, and influential community which, as he somewhere says, not without a little bitterness, "calls itself the religious world;" and as it discloses with singular force the temper and constitution of his mind, I may be permitted to enter into it more fully than one of his shortest and least complete publications might seem to deserve. He himself explains, in a very noble and elevated strain, the manner in which he was led to consider the character of the gospel missionary. He was present at one of the great missionary meetings in the metropolis, those meetings with which all the British public have more or less acquaintance, and which collect audiences as wealthy, as devout, and as estimable as can be found anywhere,

yet which are, as everybody must allow, and as many uneasily feel, as unlike apostolical conferences as can well be imagined. In such an assembly, "where the heads and leaders of the religious world were present," a speaker, whose name Irving does not mention, expressed himself amid great applause in the following manner:— "If I were asked what was the first qualification for a missionary, I would say, Prudence; and what the second? Prudence, and what the third? still I would answer, Prudence." The effect which such a statement was like to have upon one listener, at least, in the assembly, may well be imagined. Startled and disgusted, he went away, not to examine into the memoirs of missionaries, or the balance sheets of societies, but into the primitive mission and its regulations. He finds that faith, and not prudence, is the apostolic rule. He finds that religious faith alone has the prerogative of withstanding "this evil bent of prudence to become the death of all ideal and invisible things, whether poetry, sentiment, heroism, disinterestedness, or faith." He finds that the visionary soul of good, which in other matters is opposed to and conquered by the real, is in faith alone unconquerable, the essence of its nature. He then touches upon the only particular in which the early mission differs from the mission in all ages, the power of working miracles, and asks whether the lack of this faculty makes an entire change of method and procedure necessary? With lofty indignation he adds the conclusion which has been arrived at by the religious world:—

"The consistency of the Christian doctrine with everlasting truth is nothing; the more than chivalrous, the divine intrepidity and disinterestedness of its teachers is nothing; the

response of every conscience to the word of the preacher is nothing; the promise of God's Spirit is nothing; it is all to be resolved by the visible work, the outward show of a miracle. . . . The Gospel owed its success in the first ages wholly to this, or to this almost wholly; but for us, we must accommodate ourselves to the absence of these supernatural means, and go about the work in a reasonable, prudent way, if we would succeed in it; calculate it as the merchant does an adventure; set it forth as the statesman does a colony; raise the ways and means within the year, and expend them within the year; and so go on as long as we can get our accounts to balance."

This conclusion the preacher then sets himself to overthrow, by propounding the character of the "Missionary after the apostolic school," which, although prefaced with due acknowledgment of "the high and seated dignity which this Society hath attained in the judgment of the Christian Church, and the weighty and well-earned reputation which it hath obtained, not in Christendom alone, but over the widest bounds of the habitable earth," was indisputably contrary to the very idea of missions, as held and carried on by such societies. Only the first part of a work, intended to be completed in four parts, was given to the world; the mind of the preacher being more deeply engrossed from day to day in that law of God which was his meditation day and night, and directed ever to new unfolding of doctrine and instruction. This publication was dedicated to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in the remarkable letter which follows.

"MY DEAR AND HONOURED FRIEND,— Unknown as you are in the true character of your mind or your heart to the greater part of your countrymen, and misrepresented as your

works have been by those who have the ear of the vulgar, it will seem wonderful to many that I should make choice of you from the circle of my friends, to dedicate to you these beginnings of my thoughts upon the most important subject of these or any times; and when I state the reason to be, that you have been more profitable to my faith in orthodox doctrine, to my spiritual understanding of the Word of God, and to my right conception of the Christian Church than any or all the men with whom I have entertained friendship and conversation, it will, perhaps, still more astonish the mind, and stagger the belief of those who have adopted, as once I did myself, the misrepresentations which are purchased for a hire and vended for a price, concerning your character and works. . . . I have partaken so much high intellectual enjoyment from being admitted into the close and familiar intercourse with which you have honoured me; and your many conversations concerning the revelations of the Christian faith have been so profitable to me in every sense, as a student and preacher of the gospel, as a spiritual man, and a Christian pastor; and your high intelligence and great learning have at all times so kindly stooped to my ignorance and inexperience, that not merely with the affection of friend to friend, and the honour due from youth to experienced age, but with the gratitude of a disciple to a wise and generous teacher, of an anxious inquirer to the good man who hath helped him in the way of truth, I do presume to offer you the first fruits of my mind since it received a new impulse towards truth, and a new insight into its depths from listening to your discourse. Accept them in good part, and be assured that, however insignificant in themselves, they are the offering of a heart which loves your heart, and of a mind which looks up with reverence to your mind.

"Edward Irving."

These lavish thanks, bestowed with a rash prodigality, which men of less generous and effusive temperament could never be brought to understand, were, according to all ordinary rules of reason, profoundly

imprudent. To put such a name as that of Coleridge*, under any circumstances, on a work which its author was already assured would be examined with the most eager and angry jealousy, and in which a great many of his religious contemporaries would but too gladly find some suspicious tendency, was of itself imprudent. But so, I fear, was the man to whom giving of thanks and rendering of acknowledgments was always joyfully congenial. It was not in his nature either to guard himself from the suspicion of having received more than he really had received, or to provide against the danger of connecting himself openly with all whom he loved or honoured.

This publication was received with shouts of angry criticism from all sides, and called forth an *Expostulatory Letter* from Mr. W. Orme, the secretary of the outraged Missionary Society. This letter is exactly such a letter as the secretary of a missionary society, suddenly put upon its defence, would be likely to write, full of summary applications of the *argumentum ad hominem*, and much pious indignation. Between the preacher and his assailant it would be altogether impossible to decide; they were concerned with questions

* In Leigh Hunt's correspondence, published since the above was written, occurs the following notice of this dedication in a letter from Charles Lamb: "I have got acquainted with Mr. Irving, the Scotch preacher, whose fame must have reached you. Judge how his own sectarists must stare when I tell you he has dedicated a book to S. T. C., acknowledging to have learnt more from him than from all the men he ever conversed with. He is a most amiable, sincere, modest man in a room, this Boanerges in the temple. Mrs. Montagu told him the dedication would do him no good, 'That shall be a reason for doing it,' was his answer." The kind Elia adds, "Judge, now, whether this man be a quack."

in reality quite distinct, though in name the same; the one regarding the matter as an individual man, capable of all the labour and self-denial he described, might reasonably regard it; the other looking upon it with the troubled eyes of a society, whose business it was to acquire and train and send forth such men, and which had neither leisure nor inclination to consider anything which was not *practicable*. It is entirely a drawn battle between them; nor could it have been otherwise had a champion equal to the assailant taken the field.

But the religious world was too timid to perceive the matter in this light. To attack its methods was nothing less than to attack its object, nor would it permit itself to see differently; and a man who acknowledged, with even unnecessary warmth and frankness, the instruction he had received from one who certainly was not an authorised guide in religious matters, and who proffered to them a splendid antique ideal instead of the practicable modern missionary, became a man suspect and dangerous: and the coldness, of which he again and again complains, rose an invisible barrier between the fervent preacher and the reverend and pious men to whom, in all simplicity and honest endeavour to lay his best before them, he had offered only the unusual and startling truths which they could not receive.

While all this was going on Irving's life proceeded in the same full stream of undiminished popularity and personal labour. Besides the passing crowds which honoured and embarrassed the chapel in Cross Street, its congregation had legitimately increased into dimensions which the pastor, single-handed, could not dream

of retaining the full superintendence of; neither, if he could have done it, would such a state of things have been consistent with Presbyterian order. He seems to have had but one elder to yield him the aid and countenance with which Presbyterianism accompanies its ministers. Accordingly from the summer retirement at Sydenham, which he alludes to in the preface to his missionary oration, he sent the following letter, an exposition of the office to which he invited his friend, to William Hamilton: —

"Sydenham, 2nd June, 1824.

"DEAR SIR,—It has for a long time been the anxious desire and prayer, and the subject of frequent conversation to Mr. Dinwiddie and myself, that the Lord would direct us in the selection of men from amongst the congregation to fill the office of elders amongst us. . . . . And now, my dear brother, I write to lay this matter before you, that you may cast it in your mind, and make it the subject of devout meditation and prayer. That you may be rightly informed of the nature of this office I refer you to Titus i. 6; 1 Timothy v. 17; Acts xx. 17; and that you may further know the powers with which the founders of our Church have invested this office, I extract the following passage from the second book of Discipline, drawn up and adopted by the General Assembly for the regulation of the Church in the year of our Lord 1590.—Book 2nd, chapter vi.*

* The quotation is as follows:—"What manner of persons they ought to be, we refer it to the express word, and mainly to the canons written by the Apostle Paul.

"Their office is, both severally and conjointly, to watch over the flock committed to their care, both publicly and privately, that no corruption of religion or manners enter therein.

"As the pastors and doctors should be diligent in teaching, and sowing the seed of the Word; so the elders should be careful in seeking after the fruit of the same in the people.

"And now we pray of you, our dear and worthy brother, to join with us and help us in the duty for which we are ourselves unequal, of administering rightly the spiritual affairs of the congregation. No one feels himself to be able for the duties of a Christian, much less of the overseer of Christians; and you may feel unwilling to engage in that for which you may think yourself unworthy. But we pray you to trust in the Lord, who giveth grace according to our desire of it, and perfects his strength in our weakness. If you refuse, we know not which way to look; for, as the Lord knoweth, we have fixed upon you and the other four brethren because you seemed to us the most worthy. I, as your pastor, will do my utmost endeavour to instruct you in the duties of the eldership. I shall be ready at every spiritual call to go and minister along with you; and, by the grace of God, having no private ends known to me but the single end of God's glory, and the edification of the people, we who are at present of the session will join with you hand in hand in every good and gracious work. . . . .

"If you feel a good will to the work — a wish to profit and make progress in your holy calling — and a desire after the edification of the Church, the gifts will be given you, and the graces will not be withheld. Therefore, if it can be consistently with your conscience and judgment, we pray you and entreat you to accept of our solicitation, and to allow

"It appertains to them to assist the pastor in the examination of them that come to the Lord's table: Item, in visiting the sick.

"They should cause the Acts of the Assemblies, as well particular as general, to be put in execution carefully.

"They should be diligent in admonishing all men of their duty according to the rule of the Evangel.

"Things that they cannot correct by private admonition they must bring to the eldership.

"Their principal office is to hold assemblies with the pastors and doctors who are also of their number, for establishing of good order and execution of discipline, unto the which assemblies all persons are subject that remain within their bounds."

This latter is the formidable institution of the Kirk Session, which bears so large a part in Scottish domestic annals, and has been subject, in later days, to so much ignorant invective.

yourself to be constrained by the need and importunity of the Church to be named for this holy office.

"On Friday, next week, I shall come and spend the evening at your house, and converse with you on this matter; meanwhile, accept of my heartfelt wishes for your spiritual welfare, and let us rejoice together in the work which the Lord is working in the midst of us. I know that you will not take it amiss that I have used the hand of my wife in copying off this letter—[up to this point, the letter had been in Mrs. Irving's angular feminine handwriting; but here her husband's bolder characters strike in]—who is well worthy of the trust, although I cannot bring her to think or write so.

"I am, my dear brother,

"Your most affectionate pastor and friend,

"EDWARD IRVING."

This apostolical rescript, warmed with the quaint touch of domestic affection at the end, accomplished its purpose, and the excellent man who had all along been Irving's referee and assistant in everything personal to himself, his friends, and charities, became one of the rulers and recognised overseers of the Church, which henceforward had, like other Presbyterian congregations, its orthodox session, in which for years the preacher found nothing but fervent sympathy, appreciation, and assistance.

A little further on we are introduced into the bosom of the modest home in Pentonville, where domestic life and its events had now begun to expand the history of the man. The swell of personal joy with which the following letter breaks into the record of outside events and interests, will charm most people who have had occasion to send similar announcements. It is addressed to Dr. Martin:—

" Pentonville, 22nd July, 1824.

" My dear Father,—Isabella was safely delivered of a boy (whom may the Lord bless), at half-past eleven this forenoon, and is, with her child, doing well; and the grandmother, aunt, and father newly constituted, with the mother, are rejoicing in the grace and goodness of God.

" Mrs. Martin and Margaret are both well, and salute you grandfather, wishing with all our hearts that you may never lay down the name, but enjoy it while you live.

" I am well, and I think the pleasure of the Lord is prospering in my hand. A wide door and effectual is opened to me, and the Lord is opening my own eyes to the knowledge of the truth. Your arrival and our great-grandfather's, (whom, with all the grand-aunts, salute in our name—I know not what they owe us for such accumulated honours) is expected with much anxiety. I feel I shall be much strengthened by your presence.

" Your dutiful Son,

" Edward Irving."

This child—child of a love, and hope, and sorrow not to be described; celebrated, afterwards, as poet's child has rarely been, by such sublimated grief and pathetic resignation as have wept over few graves so infantine—was afterwards baptized, by the great-grandfather above referred to, in the presence of the two intermediate generations of his blood. The child was called Edward; and was to his father, with emphatic and touching verity, "his excellency and the beginning of his strength." The little tale of his existence sent echoes through all the strong man's life—echoes so tender and full of such heart-breaking pathos, as I think no human sorrow ever surpassed. In the meantime, however, all was thankfulness in the increased household; and the patriarchal assemblage of kindred, father, and father's

father, could have prophesied nothing but life and length of days to the child of such a vigorous race.

Along with all the public and domestic occurrences which filled this busy life, there are connected such links of charity and private beneficence as put richer and idler men to shame. Irving's charity was not alms, but that primitive kindness of the open house and shared meal, which is of all modes of charity the most difficult and the most delicate—a kind almost unknown to our age and conventional life. To illustrate this, we may quote one tragical episode; unfortunately more common among Scotch families, and, indeed, among families of all nations, than it is comfortable to know of:—A young man, a probationer of the Church of Scotland, who had been unsuccessful in getting a church, or, apparently, in getting any employment, had turned such thoughts as he had, in the way of literature, and had written and published, apparently by subscription, a *Treatise on the Sabbath.* Having exhausted Edinburgh, he came to London, with the vain hopes that bring all adventurers there. He seems to have had no particular talent or quality commending him to the hearts of men. Into London he dropped obscurely, nobody there finding anything to respect in his half-clerical pretensions or unremarkable book. He went to see Irving occasionally, and was observed to fall into that dismal shabbiness which marks the failure of heart and hope in men born to better things. Irving had bought his book largely, and stimulated others to do the same, and now watched with anxiety the failure and disappointment which he could not avert. One evening a man appeared at his house

with a note, which he insisted upon delivering into Irving's own hand. The note was from the unfortunate individual whom we have just described. It was written in utter despair and shame. "The messenger was the landlord of a 'low public house,'" says a lady, a relative of Irving's, then resident in his house, and acquainted with the whole melancholy story, "where M—— had been for three days and nights, and had run up a bill which he had no means of paying. It appeared that he had boasted of his intimacy with Mr. Irving, and the man had offered to carry a note from him to 'his great friend,' who, M—— declared, would at once release him from such a trifling embarrassment. Edward was puzzled what to do, but at last resolved to go to the house, pay the bill, and bring the unfortunate man home. He went, accordingly, desiring me to get a room ready. M—— was very glad to get his bill paid, but would scarcely leave the house, till Edward told him he would free him only on condition that he came with him at once. None of us saw him for a day or two, as he was, or pretended to be, so overcome with shame that he could not look us in the face. But he soon got over this, and joined the family party. Decent clothes were obtained for him, and we hoped he was really striving to give up his bad habits." This continued for some time, when, "one day, he went out after dinner and did not return. Two or three days passed, and no account could we obtain of him. At last, another note was brought, written in the same self-condemnatory strain, begging for forgiveness and assistance." There is little need for following out the sickening story. Everywhere there are families who

have received the same letters, made the same searches, heard the same humiliating confessions and entreaties, —but only for those who belong to them, whom nature makes dear amid all wretchedness, to whom the hearts of mothers and sisters cling, and in whose behalf love still hopes against hope, are such cares usually undertaken. To do it all for a stranger—to bring the half-conscious wretch into a virtuous home, to wile him with domestic society and comfort, to seek him out again and again, pay debts for him, find employments for him, receive his melancholy penitences, and encourage what superficial attempts after good there may be in him—is a charity beyond the powers of most men. In rural places, here and there, such good Samaritans may be found; but what man in London ventures to take upon himself such a responsibility? This doleful story throws a light upon the private economics of the Pentonville house which I should be sorry to lose.

Those who were in more innocent need were received with still more cordial welcomes. Friends pondering where to cast their lot—people meditating a change of residence, and desirous of seeing how the land lay—found a little mount of vision in the house of the great preacher from which to investigate and decide. A stream of society thus flowed by him, fluctuating as one went and another came. If any man among his friends was seized with the thought that London might be a sphere more desirable than Edinburgh or than Annan, such a person bethought him, naturally, of Edward Irving and his hospitable house. The great people who sought the great preacher never interfered

with the smaller people who sought his assistance and his friendship; and those who had no possible claim upon his hospitality got at least his good offices and kind words.

In the middle of the summer, just two years, as he himself tells us, from the time of his coming, the foundation stone of his new church was laid. It was planned of a size conformable to the reputation of the preacher. This event was celebrated by Irving in three sermons—one preached before, another after, and the third on occasion of the ceremony—in which last he takes pains to describe the discipline and practice of that Church of Scotland which stood always highest in his affections; but, at the same time, speaks of the building about to be erected in terms more like those that might be used by a Jew in reference to his temple, or by a Catholic of his holy shrine, than by Presbyterian lips, which acknowledge no consecration of place. Doubtless the sublimation which everything encountered in his mind, the faculty he had of raising all emotions into the highest regions, and of covering even the common with an ideal aspect unknown to itself, may have raised the expressions of a simple sentiment of reverence into this consecrating halo which his words threw around the unbuilt church; but it must not be forgotten that from his very outset a certain priestly instinct was in the man who bade "Peace be to this house" in every dwelling he entered, and who gave his benediction, as well as his prayers, like a primitive Pope or Bishop, as, indeed, he felt himself to be.

For rest and recreation the little family, leaving Lon-

don in September, paid a short visit to the paternal houses in Scotland, and then returned to Dover, where they remained for some weeks, and where Irving, never idle, entered fully, as he himself relates, into the missionary oration of which we have already spoken. At a later period, after having again entered into harness, in the November of the same year, he visited Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool by invitation, in order to stir up his countrymen there to the support and revival of the Church of their fathers, for want of which many of them had sunk into indifference, or worse. From Birmingham, where he opened a new church and preached the discourse on the "Curse as to Bodily Labour," which was published some time afterwards, he writes to his wife:—

"Birmingham, 29th or rather 30th November, 1824.

"My dearest Wife,—I am arrived safe, notwithstanding your evil auguries, or rather suggestions, of doubt and unbelief, which the faith of God's providence can alone dissipate, and the assurance that I am about our Father's business; and I have found a home here at the house of Dr. J——, my father's adjoining neighbour, and my very warm friend, into whose heart I pray the Lord I may sow some spiritual seed in return for his temporal benefits, for, as yet, he is in the darkness of Unitarianism. Nevertheless, they have family prayers, at which I this night presided, and while I sought I could not find to avoid in my prayers the matters in dispute between us, but was constrained, as it were, by superior power to make cordial testimony to our risen and reigning Lord, our Saviour and our God.

"I have seen the Committee, and find all things looking prosperously. . . . . Mr. L—— has had so much distress in his family that he was content I should come here, and not to him; but I go to-morrow afternoon to weep with him and his motherless children. Mrs. L—— loved you to the end with

a strange and strong love, and it was her greatest earthly desire to have seen you. There is something so uncommon in this that it seems to me to point the way that you should love her children, and do for their sakes what she longed to do for your mother's child. Therefore, my dear Isabella, do write Miss L——, and strengthen her, and invite her when she can be spared to come and spend some time with us. . . . Be careful of yourself and the little boy—the dear, dear little boy, my greatest earthly hope and joy—for you are not another, but myself—my better and dearer half. I pray the Lord to bless you, and be instead of a friend and husband and father to you in my absence. Let not your backwardness hinder you from family prayers night and morning.

"I hope I shall find time to write to Margaret, our beloved sister, to whom I have much that is affectionate to communicate, and something that may be instructive. . . . . Forget me not to Mary*, over whom I take more than a master's authority, feeling for her all the guardianship of a parent, which she may be pleased to permit me in. . . . . My brotherly and pastoral love to the elders of the flock. . . . . Say to Thomas, the moralist, that I love him at a distance as much as at hand—I think sometimes *full better*, as they say in Annandale. To my Isabella I say all in one word, that I desire and seek to love her as Christ loved the Church.

"Your most affectionate husband,

"Edward Irving."

Another brief letter follows from Liverpool, where he also preached for the encouragement and strengthening of the Scotch Church already in existence there. It is naturally to his wife that his letters are now chiefly addressed, and the result is, as will be shortly shown, as wonderful a revelation of heart and thoughts as one human creature ever made to another. By this time the natural course of events seems to have withdrawn him in a great degree from regular correspondence with his

* One of his servants.

friends in Scotland—a change which his marriage, and all the revolutions which had taken place in his life, as well as the full occupation of his time, and the perpetually increasing calls made upon it, rendered inevitable. His affections were unchanged, but it was no longer possible to keep up the expression of them. The new friends who multiplied around him were of a kind to make a deep impression upon a mind which was influenced more or less by all whom it held in high regard. We have already quoted his warm expressions of esteem and affection for Mr. Basil Montagu and his wife. To Coleridge he had also owned his still higher obligations. Another friend, whom his friends consider to have had no small influence on Irving, was the Rev. W. Vaughan, of Leicester, an English clergyman, who is supposed, I cannot say with what truth, to have been mainly instrumental in leading him to some views which he afterwards expressed. His distinguished countryman, Carlyle, referred to with playful affection in the letter we have just quoted, not then resident in London, was his occasional guest and close friend. Good David Wilkie, and his biographer, Allan Cunningham, were of the less elevated home society, which again connected itself with the lowest homely levels by visitors and petitioners from Glasgow and Annandale. In this wide circle the preacher moved with all the joyousness of his nature, never, however, leaving it possible for any man to forget that his special character was that of a servant of God. The light talk then indulged in by magazines, breaks involuntarily into pathos and seriousness, in the allusions made in *Fraser's Magazine*, years after, to this early summer of his career.

The laughing philosophers, over their wine, grow suddenly grave as they speak of the one among them who was not as other men:—"In God he lived, and moved, and had his being," says this witness, impressed from among the lighter regions of life and literature to bear testimony; "no act was done but in prayer; every blessing was received with thanksgiving to God; every friend was dismissed with a parting benediction." The man who could thus make his character apparent to the wits of his day must have lived a life unequivocal and not to be mistaken.

It was while living in the full exercise of all those charities, happy in the new household and the firstborn child, that he worked at the missionary oration, the history of which I have already told. Apart from the ordinary comments upon and wonderings over the stream of fashion which still flowed towards Hatton Garden, this oration was, for that year, the only visible disturbing element in his life.

CHAPTER X.

1825.

In the beginning of the year 1825,—a year for ever to be remembered in Edward Irving's life, and which, indeed, so touching, and solemn, and pathetic are all the records of its later part, I could almost wish contained no common events, but only the apotheosis of love and grief accomplished in it,—he was, notwithstanding the sad failure and discomfiture of the London Missionary Society, in its employment of his services, requested to preach for the Continental Society on a similar occasion. This Society was held up and maintained from its commencement by the nervous strength of Henry Drummond, a man already known to the preacher, over whose later course he was to exercise so great an influence. Irving, remembering the past, was slow to undertake this new commission, becoming aware, I do not doubt, that his thoughts often ran in channels so distinct from those of other men, that it was dangerous to be chosen as the mouthpiece of a large and varied body. He consented at last, however; and, true to his unfailing conscientious desire to bring out of the depths of Scripture all the light which he could perceive it to throw upon the subject in hand, his discourse naturally came to be upon prophecy. I say

naturally, because, in the evangelization of the Continent, all the mystic impersonations of the Apocalypse, —the scarlet woman on her seven hills, the ten-horned beast, all the prophetic personages of that dread undeveloped drama,—are necessarily involved. The manner in which Irving's attention had been, some short time before, specially directed to the study of prophecy, is however too interesting and characteristic to be passed without more particular notice. Several years before, Mr. Hatley Frere, one of the most sedulous of those prophetical students who were beginning to make themselves known here and there over the country, had propounded a new scheme of interpretation, for which, up to this time, he had been unable to secure the ear of the religious public. Not less confident in the truth of his scheme that nobody shared his belief in it, Mr. Frere cherished the conviction that if he could but meet some man of candid and open mind, of popularity sufficient to gain a hearing, to whom he could privately explain and open up his system, its success was certain. When Irving, all ingenuous and ready to be taught, was suddenly brought in contact with him, the student of prophecy identified him by an instant intuition.—"Here is the man!" he exclaimed to himself; and with all the eagerness of a discoverer, who seeks a voice by which to utter what he has found out, he addressed himself to the task of convincing the candid and generous soul which could condemn nothing unheard. He disclosed to his patient hearer all those details to which the public ear declined to listen; and the result was that Mr. Frere gained a disciple and expositor; and that an influence fatal to his future leisure, and

of the most momentous importance to his future destiny —which, indeed, it is impossible now to disjoin from the man, or to consider his life or character apart from— took possession of Irving's thoughts. This new subject naturally connected itself with that conviction of an approaching crisis in the fate of the world, not mild conversion, but tragic and solemn winding up and settlement, which he is said to have derived from Coleridge. Henceforward the gorgeous and cloudy vistas of the Apocalypse became a legible chart of the future to his fervent eyes.

The fascination of that study, always so engrossing and attractive, seized upon him fully; and when it came to be his business to consider the truths best adapted for the instruction and encouragement of a body of Christian men labouring on behalf of that old Roman world which has long been the heart and centre of the earth, his mind passed at once into those solemn and mysterious adumbrations of Providence in which he and many other Christian men have believed themselves able to trace the very spot, between what was fulfilled and what was unfulfilled, in which they themselves stood. Could such a standing ground be certainly obtained, who can doubt that here is indeed the guidance of all others for any effort of evangelization? Irving had no doubt upon the subject. To him the record was distinct, the past apparent, the future to be reverently but clearly understood. Superficial pious addresses were impossible to a man who went into everything with his whole heart and soul. His Bible was not to him the foundation from which theology was to be proved, but a Divine word, instinct with meaning never

to be exhausted, and from which light and guidance—not vague, but particular—could be brought for every need. And the weight of his "calling" to instruct was never absent from his mind. To the missionaries, accordingly, he brought forth the picture of an apostle; and opened before the eyes of those who aimed at a re-evangelization of old Christendom a cloudy but splendid panorama of the fate which was about to overtake the sphere of their operations, and all the mysterious agencies, half discerned in actual presence, and clearly indicated in Scripture, which were before them in that difficult and momentous field. In a man distinguished as an orator this tendency to avoid the superficial and go to the very heart, as he understood it, of his subject, was neither expected nor recognised by the ordinary crowd. In this same spring of 1825, in which he preached his prophetical discourse for the instruction of a society engaged upon the Continent—on the very ground where prophecy, according to his interpretation, was to be fulfilled—he also preached for the Highland School Society; a subject which might have been supposed very congenial to his heart, and in which I have no doubt his audience looked for such glowing pictures of Highland glens and mountains, of primitive faith, and picturesque godliness, the romance of religion, as pious orators, glad of so fluent a topic of declamation, have made customary on such occasions. The orator took no such easy and beaten track. He entered into the subject of education with all the conscientiousness of his nature, setting it forth fully in a manner which, whatever may be the inevitable expediencies to which modern civilisation is driven, must

command the respect and admiration of everybody who has ever thought upon the subject. I am anxious to point out this peculiarity, because I do not think it is one for which Irving, all oratorical and declamatory as he is supposed to have been, gets the honour he deserves. It is not my part to decide upon the right or wrong of his views, especially on such a subject as that of prophecy: I am only anxious to indicate fully a habit of his mind, which the correspondence shortly to be given will illustrate more fully than anything else can do. When any subject was presented to him his mind immediately carried it away out of the everyday atmosphere into a world of thought and ideal truth, where practicabilities, much more expediencies, did not enter;—interrogated it closely to get at its heart;—expounded it so from the depths, from the heights, from the unseen soul of the matter, that people, accustomed to look at it only from the outside, stood by aghast, and did not know the familiar doctrine which they themselves had put into his hands. This will be found the case in almost everything he touches. No sooner does he apply himself to the special consideration of any point than all its hidden, spiritual meanings come gleaming upon his mind. He goes about his daily business always attended by this radiant track of meditation, pondering in his heart through the streets and squares, among the fields, by the way. By close, secret dwelling upon it, the ideal soul contained in any intellectual truth gradually warms and glows into regions ineffable before his eyes. Men enough there are in all times—in our time, perhaps, too many—who can expound the practicable. Irving's vocation was of a totally different nature: it was his

to restore to the enterprises and doctrines of universal Christianity—without consideration of what was practicable or how it could be realised — the Divine soul, which use and familiarity perpetually obscure.

His discourse to the Continental Society, though it did not raise such a commotion as the missionary oration, was still far from palatable to some of his hearers. "Several of the leading members of the committee," we are told, "had neither Christian patience nor decorum enough to hear the preacher out, but abruptly left the place;" and, from the comments that followed, Irving was soon brought to understand that he had been misapprehended, and that political meanings, of which he was innocent, had been suspected in his sermon. Catholic Emancipation was then one of the questions of the day; and the advocates of both sides suspected him, oddly enough, of having supported their several views of the matter. At the same time, his heart had gone into the task; he had found in prophetical interpretation a study which charmed him deeply, and had found himself drawn, as was natural, into a closer, exclusive fellowship with those who pursued the same study and adopted the same views. Urged by his brother-students of prophecy, and inclined of himself to give forth those investigations in which he had himself been comforted, to the world, he devoted his leisure during the year to amplifying and filling out the germ which had been in his discourse. "Thus it came to pass," he says in the preface, "that to clear myself from being a political partizan in a ministerial garb, and to gratify the desires of these servants of Christ, I set forth this publication, on which I pray the blessing of God to rest."

He entitled the book, *Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed*, and dedicated it, with his usual magnanimous acknowledgment of indebtedness, to the gentleman who had first directed his thoughts to the subject.

"To my beloved friend and brother in Christ, Hatley Frere, Esq.

"When I first met you, worthy sir, in a company of friends, and moved, I know not by what, asked you to walk forth into the fields that we might commune together, while the rest enjoyed their social converse, you seemed to me as one who dreamed, while you opened in my ear your views of the present time, as foretold in the Book of Daniel and the Apocalypse. But being ashamed of my own ignorance, and having been blessed from my youth with the desire of instruction, I dared not to scoff at what I heard, but resolved to consider the matter. More than a year passed before it pleased Providence to bring us together again, at the house of the same dear friend and brother in the Lord, when you answered so sweetly and temperately the objections made to your views, that I was more and more struck with the outward tokens of a believer in truth; and I was again ashamed at my own ignorance, and again resolved to consider the matter; after which I had no rest in my spirit until I waited upon you and offered myself as your pupil, to be instructed in prophecy according to your ideas thereof; and for the ready goodwill with which you undertook, and the patience with which you performed this kind office, I am for ever beholden to you, most dear and worthy friend. . . . For I am not willing that any one should account of me as if I were worthy to have had revealed to me the important truths contained in this discourse, which may all be found written in your 'Treatise on the Prophecies of Daniel;' only the Lord accounted me worthy to receive the faith of these things which He first made known to you, His more worthy servant. And if He make me the instrument of conveying that faith to any of His Church, that they may make themselves ready for His coming, or to any of the world, that they may take refuge in the ark of His salvation from the deluge of wrath which abideth the

impenitent, to His name shall all the praise and glory be ascribed by me, His unworthy servant, who, through mercy, dareth to subscribe himself, your brother in the bond of the Spirit, and the desire of the Lord's coming,

"EDWARD IRVING."

This opening season of '25 seems to have brought a large share of public occupation to the preacher, whose unbounded popularity attracted a crowded audience around him at his every appearance. Another careful and weighty discourse upon the condition of Ireland,—not, perhaps, specially adapted to a moment when much of the generous feeling of the country had been roused, in the discussions upon Catholic Emancipation, to take the part of that portion of our countrymen who lay under disabilities so grievous; but full of truth, which experience has proved,—was preached at the instance of the Hibernian Society. He is also recorded to have made a striking and very characteristic appearance at a meeting of the same Society, not long before. The power of agitation in that period, so much more strongly political than this, was at its height; and that wonderful and crafty leader, who won the Catholic battle almost single-handed, and ruled his island for a lifetime with autocratic sway, already threw his shadow even upon such an institution as the Irish Bible Society. Stanch Orangemen on their native soil would undoubtedly have defied such an influence with double pertinacity and zeal; but metropolitan meekness counselled otherwise. An English clergyman of high standing and well-known character called for Irving to drive him to the meeting which was to be held under these circumstances, and made a cautious attempt to tutor the

uncompromising orator. "Take us to one of your Highland glens," said the well-meaning peacemaker, "and give us a picture of the simplicity and holiness of life there produced by the study of the Word." Irving, who had not adopted that natural and easy, superficial way of pleading the cause of his own countrymen, asked with some astonishment why his subject was to be thus prescribed to him. The answer was one of all others least likely to tame the habitual fervour and openness of the Scotch preacher. Some of O'Connell's followers were to be present at the meeting, as a check upon over-bold criticism; and it had been decided that nothing was to be said which could provoke the interference of these self-appointed moderators. It is unnecessary to say that Irving altogether repudiated this arrangement, and came under no engagement to make the innocent pastoral address, meaning nothing, which was suggested to him. The meeting was very noisy and much disturbed, as had been expected. One of the speakers, a Mr. Pope, who had come from Ireland warmly indignant at the petty priestly artifices by which the circulation of the Bible was hindered, was so often interrupted, that at length the Chairman, giving way to the violence of the unwelcome visitors, added his authority to the outcries, and requested the speaker to sit down. This silenced witness was followed by other speakers more complacent, who amused the audience with sentiment and mild description, such as had been vainly solicited from Irving. When his time came, as one of his auditors relates, he advanced, in all the strength of his imposing height and demeanour, to the front of the

platform, and "lifting up a heavy stick, which he carried, struck it on the floor to give additional emphasis to his words. 'I have been put to shame this day,' said the indignant orator; 'I have had to sit still and see a servant of God put down in a so-called Christian assembly for speaking the simple truth. Ichabod! Ichabod! the glory is departed!'" The speech that followed this bold beginning was *not* interrupted; and, when the meeting was over, the orator was surrounded by a crowd of excited and applauding hearers, showering thanks and congratulations upon him.

From this scene another witness leads us to one very different and more congenial to the most human-hearted of men. An account of "an afternoon spent in his society among the poor of London," which appeared some years since in the pages of the *Free Church Magazine*, gives a quaint picture at once of the disabilities and mistakes of ordinary visitors of the poor, and of Irving's entire capacity for that noble and difficult office. Some ladies in the city had established an infant school in the district of Billingsgate, and finding themselves quite unsuccessful in persuading the people to send their children to it, applied to Irving to help them. He, at the height of his splendid reputation, whom critics had assailed with accusations of indifference to the poor, immediately consented to give his aid in this humble mission. He went with them, accordingly, through the district. In the first house he left the explanation of their errand to his female clients, and speedily discovered the mistake these good people made. The scene is full of comic elements, and one can scarcely refrain from imagining the appearance that

such a group must have presented: the city ladies, important in their mission, impressing upon the hesitating, half-affronted mother, into whose room they had made their way, all the charitable advantages which they had ordained for her children,—and the great figure of the preacher standing by, letting them have their own way, doubtless not without amusement in his compassionate eyes. When they came to the second house, he took the office of spokesman upon himself. "When the door was opened, he spoke in the kindest tone to the woman who opened it, and asked permission to go in. He then explained the intention of the ladies, asked how many children she had, and whether she would send them? A ready consent was the result; and the mother's heart was completely won when the visitor took one of her little ones on his knee, and blessed her." The city ladies were confounded. They had honestly intended to benefit the poor, very, very distantly related to them by way of Adam and the forgotten patriarchs—but the cheerful brotherhood of the man who had blessed the bread of the starving Glasgow weavers was as strange to them as if he had spoken Hebrew instead of English. "Why, Mr. Irving," exclaimed one of the ladies when they got to the street, "you spoke to that woman as if she were doing *you* a favour, and not you conferring one on *her!* How could you speak so? and how could you take up that child on your knee?" "The woman," he replied, "does not as yet know the advantages which her children will derive from your school; by-and-by, she will know them, and own her obligations to you; and in so speaking and in blessing her child, I do but follow the ex-

ample of our Lord, who blessed the little ones, the lambs of His flock." In another house the children had beautiful hair, which the benevolent visitors, intent on doing good after their own fashion, insisted on having cut short as a preliminary of admission. The great preacher lifted the pretty curls in his hand and pleaded for them, but in vain. When they were denied admission at one house, he left his benediction to the unseen people within, and passed on. On the whole, his companions did not know what to make of him. Irving's fashion of visiting "the poor" was unknown in Billingsgate.

Such a junction and contrast of duties throws a singular light upon his full and various life.

In the early summer a deputation from Scotland, in the persons of two gentlemen, henceforward to be numbered among his warmest and closest friends, Mr. James Bridges, and Mr. Matthew Norman Macdonald, two Edinburgh lawyers, of influence and weight in the Church, came, on a mission of inquiry, to ascertain, apparently, whether the much-distinguished preacher was equally zealous in the performance of his pastoral duties, whether he was worthy of the honour of being called to a church in Edinburgh, and whether he would be disposed to accept such an invitation. Irving's determination, lauded by Dr. Chalmers, of not suffering his hours of study to be interrupted by visitors, kept these gentlemen wandering about the unsuggestive streets of Pentonville till after two o'clock, when he received visitors. The inquirers returned not only satisfied but delighted, and stimulated the church which had sent them out as laudable spies, to discover

not the nakedness but the wealth and vigour of the land, to send another deputation, expressly asking Mr. Irving to become their minister. His reply to this application I have been favoured with by Dr. Douglas Maclagan, in whose possession the letter now is:—

"My beloved Brethren in the Gospel of Christ,—I rejoice to have received by your hands and from your lips the assurance that such a grave and spiritual body of Christians as the eldership of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, have judged me a fit person to be presented to the people of Hope Place Chapel, as one worthy to exercise the ministry of word and sacrament over them, if they should see it good and profitable to call me—the more when I consider the character and gifts of my dear friend and brother in the ministry *, who has been called from among them to labour elsewhere. . . . . All that has been said on both sides has sunk deep into my mind, and I have sought grace to enable me to come to a wise and righteous determination; and, after much thought and anxiety, I have expressed the state of my feelings towards both sides in a letter to my session and people, of which there is enclosed an exact copy.

"You will perceive, from that letter, by what strong and enduring ties I am drawn towards my native country and my beloved Church, and by what present stronger, though not so enduring, ties I am held here. I have no doubt the time is coming when the Spirit will press me to declare in the ear of the Church of Scotland that truth which I am bound at present to deliver here, until I shall have finished the burden of it. When that time comes, you will find me in the midst of you; or, if any emergency should occur before that time to hasten my resolution, it is, I think, to my own country, and to the chief city of it, that I will present myself.

"You have been faithful to your trust, and are worthy to be the messengers of such a spiritual body. The Lord conduct you on your way to your home, and bring you in peace to

* The Rev. Dr. Gordon.

your office in His Church! And be assured of the communion and fellowship of

"Your brother in the Gospel and in the Eldership,

"EDWARD IRVING."

A word or two as to the most modest and primitive life led by the subject of our memoir will not be out of place here. I give it on the authority of one of his nearest relatives, a lady, who frequently lived in his house:—"Mr. Irving's rule was to see any of his friends who wished to visit him without ceremony at breakfast. Eight o'clock was the hour. Family worship first, and then breakfast. At ten he rose, bade every one good-bye, and retired to his study. He gave no audience again till after three. Two o'clock was the dinner hour; and, after that, should no one come to prevent him, he generally walked out, Mrs. Irving accompanying him; and, until the baby took hooping-cough, Mr. Irving almost always carried him in his arms. Some people laughed at this, but that he did not care for in the very least." To see the great preacher, admired and flattered by the highest personages in the kingdom, marching along the Pentonville streets with his baby, must have been a spectacle to make ordinary men open their eyes. An amusing personal anecdote, belonging to a similar period, comes from the same authority. His indifference to money has been visible with sufficient distinctness throughout his life; but, after his marriage, according to a primitive habit most worthy of imitation, he committed the charge of his finances entirely to the prudence of his wife, and carried sometimes only the smallest of coins, sometimes nothing at all, in his own private purse. This habit sometimes brought him into situations of

amusing embarrassment. On one occasion he had left home to visit a member of his congregation somewhere on the line of the New Road; but, finding himself late, took, without considering the state of his pocket, the Paddington *coach*, omnibuses having not yet come into fashion. As soon as the vehicle was on its way, the unlucky passenger recollected that he was penniless. His dismay at the thought was overwhelming, but soon brightened with a sudden inspiration. Looking around him, he artfully fixed upon the most benevolent-looking face he saw, and poured his sorrows into his fellow-traveller's ear. "I told him that I was a clergyman," was the account he gave to his amused home-audience; "that, since I had obtained a wife from the Lord, I had given up all concern with the things of this world, leaving my purse in my wife's hands; and that to-day I had set out to visit some of my flock at a distance, without recollecting to put a shilling in my purse for the coach." The good man thus addressed was propitious, and paid the fare. But the honour due to such a good Samaritan is lessened when we learn that the preacher's remarkable appearance, and scarcely less extraordinary request, betrayed him; and the stranger had the honour and satisfaction, for his sixpence, of making the acquaintance of Edward Irving.

Early in this summer, clouds began to appear in the firmament of the new household. The baby, so joyfully welcomed and dearly prized, was seized with hooping-cough. And, in the end of June, Mrs. Irving, then herself in a delicate condition of health, accompanied by her sister, took little Edward down to Scotland, to the peaceful manse of Kirkcaldy, for change of air.

The following letter was written immediately after the departure of the travellers:—

"London, Friday Afternoon; July 1st, 1825.

"MY DEAR ISABELLA AND BELOVED WIFE,—I suppose, by the time this arrives in Kirkcaldy, you will be arrived, and little Edward, and our dear brother and sister, and faithful Mary; and, because I cannot be there to welcome you in person to your father's house, I send this my representative to take you by the hand, to embrace you by the heart, and say welcome, thrice welcome, to your home and your country, which you have honoured by fulfilling the duties of a wife and mother well and faithfully—the noblest duties of womanhood. And while I say this to yourself, I take you to your father and mother, and say unto them: Receive, honoured parents, your daughter—your eldest-born child—and give her double honour as one who hath been faithful and dutiful to her husband, and brings with her a child to bear down your piety, and faith, and blessedness to other generations, if it please the Lord. Thus I fulfil the duty of restoring with honour and credit—well due and well won—one whom I received from their house as its best gift to me.

"When I returned, I went solitary to Mrs. Montagu's, who was pleased with your letter, in order to see whether I was expected at Highgate. . . . So to Highgate B—— and I hied, and we found the sage *, as usual, full of matter. He talked with me privately about his own spiritual concerns, and I trust he is in the way of salvation, although I see that he has much to prevail against, as we have all. . . . I have pastoral work for all next week but Thursday, and shall continue so until I remove. To-day I have been busy with my first discourse upon the 'Will of the Father,' which I pray you to study diligently in the Gospel by John i. 13, 14; v. 20, 21; vii. 37, 44, 65; viii. 16, 19, 26, 28; x. 27, 29—and all those discourses study if you would know the precedency which the will of the Father hath of the preaching of the Son, and how much constant honour you must give to it, in order to be a disciple of Christ. My head is wearied,

* Coleridge, then living at Highgate with his friends the Gillmans.

and with difficulty directeth my hand to write these few words, which I am moved to by my affection to you as my wife, and my desire after you as a saint. Therefore, I conclude hastily, with my love to our dear parents, brothers, and sisters, and all our kindred. The Lord preserve my wife and child!

"Your faithful husband,

"EDWARD IRVING."

This letter was followed, a week after, by another letter, in which his doubts and inclinations, in respect to the call from Edinburgh—his decision of which question has been already recorded—are fully set forth. The tone of this letter is far from enthusiastic as regards London, notwithstanding his intention of remaining in it.

. . . "I have Mr. Paul and Mr. Howden waiting upon me as a deputation from the Kirk Session of the West Kirk, Edinburgh, that I would consent to succeed Dr. Gordon, and I now write to you for your counsel and advice in this matter. Take it into your serious consideration, and seek counsel of the Lord, and write me your judgment. For myself, observe how it is. There is no home here, either to our family or my ministrations, and all the love of my people cannot make it a home. If anything would have rallied the Scotch people to the Church, my notoriety, not to say my talents, would have done it; and you know how vain it has been. The religious bodies are too bigoted to receive me with any cordiality. I had wished to preach the Gospel in Edinburgh, though the call has come sooner than I had looked for. I have a desire to meet the anti-christian influence full in the face, and, in God's help, to wrestle with it. I love the Church of Scotland, and would contend for its prosperity.

"These are weighty considerations. But, on the other hand, it would break the heart of so many dear friends and servants of Christ who have cherished me here. I fear it would disperse the flock, and smite down the proposed National Church. I see the victory over my enemies, in and out of the Established Church, to be already at hand, and their advantage likely to be promoted by my continuance. But I

know not how it is, the considerations on this side of the question do not muster so strong.

"There is a feeling of instability—a sense of insufficiency connected with all one's undertakings here—I know not what to make of it. I shall consider the matter very maturely. Do you the same, and return me your (opinion) by return of post. Consult also your dear father and mother."

The wife's answering letter does not seem to have been preserved; and in the next (from which it appears that she had been, as was natural, inclined to the change) he intimates his decision. In the meantime, he had removed from his own solitary home to the hospitable house of Mr. Montagu:—

"25 Bedford Square; 19th July, 1825.

"My dearest Wife,—On Sunday I desired a meeting of the church and congregation at six o'clock last night, and then laid before them both my resolution to remain amongst them, and the grounds of it; and I now haste, having completed my morning's study, to lay before you what I laid before them, that I may have your approbation, which is all that now remains to the full contentment of my own mind.

"The invitation, I said, had three chief reasons to recommend it, and by which it still remains on my mind weightily recommended:—First. That so well advocated in your letter, which sunk deep into my thoughts, that it might be the call of Providence to do for Edinburgh what I had been called upon to do for London, and what no one of the ministers of God had done before I came. Secondly. The desire I had to be restored to the communion of the true ministers of Christ and servants of God in the Church of Scotland, who heretofore, with a very few exceptions, have estranged me from their confidence. Thirdly. The love which I had to a manageable pastoral charge. On the other hand, three more weighty reasons prevailed with me to remain:—First. Their desire of my ministry, and assurance of co-operation in my official duties, which, going elsewhere, was all to work for. Secondly. The consciousness that I had not yet told half my

message out of the Gospel, and but partially fulfilled my ministry. Thirdly. The desire I had that my countrymen should yet have a little longer trial, and the opportunity which a new church would afford them of returning to the bosom of the Church. Lastly. The strong love which I bore my people, and which made me shrink from any call to depart but such an one as was very imperious and strong. But while I consented to stay in my present ministry for these weighty reasons, I gave them, at the same time, distinctly to understand, that such a call might be given me as would be able to call me elsewhere; and that, without a call, if the Spirit moved me, I would certainly go to the world's end. Having said this much I left the desk, and the people remained to consider what was best to be done, and I have but heard imperfectly from Mr. Paul and Mr. Howden, who breakfasted with us this morning, that it was conducted in a good spirit.

"I trust that my dear Isabella will approve of what I have done, which I have certainly done by much patient deliberation, yet with a strong resolution, and at the same time a high sense and feeling of all the considerations on the other side. The thing has done much good already, and will do much more, chiefly as it has brought out the declaration and understanding on all hands that I may be called away, which the people here had little thought of. Also, that I will stand justified before incredulous Edinburgh by two other witnesses. For I am not to seek as to the true sentiment that is still entertained by the religious part of men there concerning me, and would gladly see it wiped away.

"Last Sabbath I preached in the morning on the subject of the Trinity, showing that the revelation of the Word consisted of three parts—Law, Gospel, and Obedience—which were severally the forms of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; so that a trinity was everywhere in the Word of God; and I intend to continue the same subject next Sabbath, and on the following one to show that there are three constant states by which the soul expresses her homage to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:—First, prayer; secondly, faith; and thirdly, activity, which are a trinity in unity with the new man. In the evening I lectured on John sending

his disciples to inquire at Christ of his Messiahship, showing thence how his mind, partaking of the vulgar error, had lost the impression of the outward signs shown at his baptism, and thence arguing the total insufficiency of that manner of demonstration and proof to which the last century hath given such exaggerated importance. I showed that Christ's action before the messengers, and his message to the Baptist, was a fulfilment of the prophecy in the 61st of Isaiah, which led me to explain the great point, that miracles were nothing but the incarnation or visible representation of the Holy Ghost, as Jesus of Nazareth was of the Word of God; and that, as His word was the will of the Father, so were His works the acts of the Spirit dwelling in Him, and about to proceed from Him.

"We were at Allan Cunningham's last night, where I met with Wilkie. They all desired their love to you and Margaret. Everybody inquires after you, and rejoices in your welfare. You must keep yourself quiet. Let not ceremony or any other cause take hold of your kind heart, and disturb you from necessary quiet. I trust little Edward continues to thrive. Cease not to pray for him and me as for yourself. I see not why we may not pray in the plural number, as if we were present together. I shall keep by eight in the morning and ten at night for my hours of prayer. Oh, Isabella, pray much for me! I need it much. These are high things after which I strive, and I oft fear lest Satan should make them a snare to my soul. . . . . The Lord protect you all, and save you!

"Your affectionate husband,

"EDWARD IRVING."

"London; 25 Bedford Square, August 2d, 1825.

"4th August: *Dies natalis atque fatalis incidit.*

"'The day of birth and of death draweth nigh.'

"MY DEAREST WIFE,—. . . . I have not altered my mind upon the course of my journey, which I will direct forthwith to Kirkcaldy by the steamboat, without passing at the present through the towns in England, which, if all be well ordered, I can take upon my return. . . . . I greatly rejoice that you are enjoying the quiet and repose whereof you stand so much

in need, and that little Edward is thriving daily. The Lord give health and strength to his soul! I pray you, my dear Isabella, to bear in mind that he has been consecrated to God by the Sacrament of Baptism, whereby Christ did assure to our faith the death of his body of sin, and the life of his spirit of righteousness; and that he is to be brought up in the full faith and assurance of the fulfilment of this greatest promise and blessing, which our dear Lord hath bestowed upon our faith; wherefore adopt not the base notion, into which many parents fall, of waiting for a future conversion and new birth, but regard that as fully promised to us from the beginning, and let all your prayers, desires, words, and thoughts towards the child proceed accordingly. For I think that we are all grown virtually adult Baptists, whatever we be professedly, in that we take no comfort or encouragement out of the Sacrament. Let it not be so with you, whom God hath set to be a mother in Israel.

"Since I wrote, I have passed a Sabbath, when I had much of the Lord's presence in all the exercises of public worship, and was able to declare the truth with much liberty; preaching in the morning from Rom. viii. 3, 4, and opening the sentence of death which there was in the law, and the reprieve of life which there was in the work and gospel of Christ,—a subject which I mean to follow up by showing that the reprieve is for the end of our fulfilling the law, which, as an antecedent to the Gospel, is the form of our death, as the consequent of the Gospel is the form of our life, to be perfected and completed in the state of complete restitution, when Christ shall present His Church without spot to His Father, and shall then resign the mediatorial kingdom. This all deduces itself from the doctrine of the Trinity: the Father is not beloved nor obeyed without the Son; but the Son sends forth his Spirit, that we may be enabled to come and obey the Father. So that, unless the law be kept in our continual view, the Spirit hath no end nor operation. In the evening I lectured upon Luke vii. 29, 36, setting forth the three forms of the Pharisees: First,—The Pharisee of the intellect or reason (of whom Edinburgh is the chief city), who contemn faith and form equally. Second,—The Pharisee of form, who cannot away with spiritual regeneration.

Third,—The Spiritual Pharisee, or religious world, who take up notions, and language, and preachers upon second hand from spiritual people, instead of waiting for them directly from the Spirit by the working of faith upon the divine Word. I pray the Lord to bless these discourses.

"I have agreed with Collins about the publication of the *Original Standards of the Church*, concerning which I pray you to say nothing. I shall write my essay on the salt sea where Knox first matured his idea of the Scottish Reformation. . . . . My dear Isabella, guard against the formalities which abound on every side of you. Let me find you grounded and strengthened in the spirit of godliness. For the other book*, it is nearly finished. I have just brought to a close the destruction of Babylon. And I have a part to write upon the things which follow till the revelation of our blessed Redeemer in the clouds of heaven. Pray God that my pen may be guided to truth, and that much profit may flow into the Church from what I write! . . . . I pray the Lord to bless you and Edward continually; write me, when you can do it without wearying yourself, or injuring your health. . . . Say to the patriarch that I have got a noble New Testament, in Greek, with all the Glosses and Scholiæ of the Fathers, with which I delight myself. The Lord bless you all! Forget not to give my kind regards to Mary, and to encourage her to walk steadfastly in the faith.

"Yours in one body and soul,

"EDWARD IRVING."

The publication referred to in the above letter, the *Original Standards of the Church*, did not actually appear till many years later, when it came in the shape, not of a simple republication, intended for the edification of all, but as a sharp rebuke and reminder to the Church of Scotland, between whom and her devoted son a gulf of separation had grown. It does not, consequently, belong to this period of his history; but the fact that

* *Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed.*

it had been so long in his mind, and that these documents were recognised by him specially as the confession of *his* faith, and as containing all the doctrines for which he afterwards suffered the penalties of the Church, is interesting and significant. No man in modern times has so much proclaimed the merits of those ancient standards, or so pertinaciously ranged himself under their shelter, as this man, whom the Church which holds them cut off as a heretic.

It will also be seen, from these letters, that Irving had already found his way to those views of baptism which he did not publish to the world till some time after. The instincts of fatherhood had quickened his mind in his investigations. He had found it impossible, when his thoughts were directed to this subject, to rest in the vagueness of ordinary conceptions; "We assuredly believe that by baptism we are engrafted in Christ Jesus," says simply that ancient, primitive confession to which his heart turned as the clearest, simple utterance, uncontroversial and single-minded, of the national faith. When Irving turned towards that question, he "assuredly believed" the canon he had subscribed at his ordination; and receiving it with no lukewarm and indifferent belief, but with a faith intense and real, came to regard the ordinance in so much warmer and clearer a light than is usual in his Church, that his sentiments seem to have differed from those of the High Church party of England, who hold baptismal regeneration, by the merest hair's-breadth of distinction—a distinction which, indeed, I confess myself unable to appreciate. This intensified and brightened apprehension, which made the ordinance not a sign only, nor a vaguely mysterious conjunction

of sign and reality, but an actual, effectual sacrament, rejoiced the new-made father to the bottom of his heart. His soul expanded in a deeper tenderness over the chrisom child, whom he "assuredly believed" to be "engrafted in Christ Jesus." Years afterwards, he makes a touching acknowledgment of gratitude for this insight — given, as in the fervour and simplicity of his heart he believed it to be, as a strengthening preparation against the sharpest personal anguish of life.

In the months of July and August he remained alone in London, living in the house of his friends Mr. and Mrs. Montagu, and proceeding vigorously, as has been seen, in his labours — with no serious fears respecting the boy who was so dear to his heart, of whom he had received comforting news. In the beginning of September, he went to Scotland to join his wife, who was then in expectation of the birth of her second child. But, with the cold autumn winds, trouble and fear came upon the anxious household. The baby, Edward, had rallied so much as to make them forget their former fears on his account; but it was only a temporary relief. On the second day of October, a daughter was born; and for ten days longer, in another room of the house, separated from the poor mother, who, for her other baby's sake, was not permitted ever again, in life, to behold her first-born, little Edward lingered out the troubled moments, and died slowly in his father's agonised sight. The new-born infant was baptized on Sunday, the 9th October, for a consolation to their hearts; and on the 11th, her brother died. Dr. Martin, of Kirkcaldy, writing to his father—the venerable old man who had baptized little Edward, his descendant

of the fourth generation—describes with tears in his voice, how, sitting beside the little body, he could do nothing but kneel down and weep, till reminded of the words used by the child's father "in a sense in which, probably, they have not often been applied, but the force of which, at the moment, was very striking, when he saw all about him dissolved in tears, on viewing the dear infant's cruel struggle, 'Look not at the things which are seen, but at those which are unseen!'"—— "Edward and Isabella," he continues, "both bear the stroke, though sore, with wonderful resignation. . . . . Two nights ago they resolved, in their conference and prayers concerning him, to surrender him wholly to God —to consider him as not their child, but God's. . . . . When her husband came down stairs to-day, he said, in reply to a question from her mother, 'She is bearing it as well as one saint could wish to see another do.'— Blessed be the Holy Name! David will tell you that the little Margaret was received into the Church visible on Sabbath afternoon. . . . . I should have said, that when assembled to worship as a family, after all was over, Mr. Irving, before I began to pray, requested leave to address us; and he addressed us, all and several, in the most affectionate and impressive manner. The Lord bless, and fix his words! In testimony of his gratitude for the consolation afforded him and his wife, he has gone out to visit and comfort some of the afflicted around us."

The manner in which Irving himself announced this first interruption of his family happiness, with an elevation and ecstasy of grief which I do not doubt will go to the hearts of all who have suffered similar

anguish, as indeed the writer can scarcely transcribe it without tears, will be seen by the following letter, addressed to William Hamilton, and written on the day of death itself:—

"Kirkcaldy, 11th October, 1825.

"OUR DEARLY-BELOVED FRIEND,—The hand of the Lord hath touched my wife and me, and taken from us our well-beloved child, sweet Edward, who was dear to you also, as he was to all who knew him. But before taking him, He gave unto us good comfort of the Holy Ghost, as He doth to all His faithful servants; and we are comforted, verily we are comforted. Let the Lord be praised, who hath visited the lowly, and raised them up!

"If you had been here yesterday and this day when our little babe was taken, you would have seen the stroke of death subdued by faith, and the strength of the grave overcome; for the Lord hath made His grace to be known unto us in the inward part. I feel that the Lord hath well done in that He hath afflicted me, and that by His grace I shall be a more faithful minister unto you, and unto all the flock committed to my charge. Now is my heart broken — now is its hardness melted; and my pride is humbled, and my strength is renewed. The good name of the Lord be praised!

"Our little Edward, dear friend, is gone the way of all the earth; and his mother and I are sustained by the Prince and Saviour who hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. The affection which you bear to us, or did bear towards the dear child who is departed, we desire that you will not spend it in unavailing sorrow, but elevate it unto Him who hath sustained our souls, even the Lord our Saviour Jesus Christ; and if you feel grief and trouble, oh, turn the edge of it against sin and Satan to destroy their works, for it is they who have made us to drink of this bitter cup.

"Communicate this to all our friends in the congregation and church, as much as may be, by the perusal of this letter, that they may know the grace of God manifested unto us; and oh, William Hamilton, remember thyself, and tell them

all that they are dust, and that their children are as the flowers of the field.

"Nevertheless, God granting me a safe journey, I will preach at the Caledonian church on Sabbath the 23rd, though I am cut off from my purpose of visiting the churches by the way. The Lord be with you, and your brethren of the eldership, and all the church and congregation.

"Your affectionate friend,

"EDWARD IRVING.

"My wife joining with me."

With such an ode and outburst of the highest strain of grief, brought so close to the gates of heaven, that the dazzled mourner, overpowered with the greatness of the anguish and the glory, sees the Lord within, and takes a comfort more pathetic than any lamentation, was the child Edward buried. He was but fifteen months old; but either from his natural loveliness, or from the subliming influence of his father's love and grief, seems to have left a memory behind him as of the very ideal and flower of infancy. By his father and mother the child was always held in pathetically thankful remembrance. "Little Edward, their fairest and their first," writes one of Mrs. Irving's sisters, "never lost his place in their affections. Writing of one of her little ones, some years afterwards, my sister said, 'I have said all to you when I tell you that we think her very like our little Edward;'" and the same lady tells us of Irving's answer to somebody who expressed the superficial and common wonder, so often heard, that helpless babies should grow up to be the leaders and guides of the world, in words similar to those which break from him in his Preface to *Ben-Ezra* "Whoso studieth as I

have done, and reflecteth as I have sought to reflect, upon the first twelve months of a child; whoso hath had such a child to look and reflect upon, as the Lord for fifteen months did bless me withal (whom I would not recall, if a wish could recall him, from the enjoyment and service of our dear Lord), will rather marvel how the growth of that wonderful creature, which put forth such a glorious bud of being, should come to be so cloaked by the flesh, cramped by the world, and cut short by Satan, as not to become a winged seraph; will rather wonder that such a puny, heartless, feeble thing as manhood should be the abortive fruit of the rich bud of childhood, than think that childhood is an imperfect promise and opening of the future man. And therefore it is that I grudged not our noble, lovely child, but rather do delight that such a seed should blossom and bear in the kindly and kindred paradise of my God. And why should not I speak of thee, my Edward! seeing it was in the season of thy sickness and death the Lord did reveal in me the knowledge and hope and desire of His Son from heaven? Glorious exchange! He took my son to His own more fatherly bosom, and revealed in my bosom the sure expectation and faith of His own eternal Son! Dear season of my life, ever to be remembered, when I knew the sweetness and fruitfulness of such joy and sorrow."

I cannot doubt that the record of this infant's death, and the traces it leaves upon the life and words of his sorrowful but rejoicing father, will endear the great orator to many sorrowful hearts. So far as I can perceive, no other event of his life penetrated so pro-

foundly the depths of his spirit. And I cannot think it is irreverent to lift the veil, now that both of those most concerned have rejoined their children, from that sanctuary of human sorrow, faith, and patience. Those of us who know such days of darkness may take some courage from the sight. And such of my readers as may have become interested in the domestic portions of this history will be pleased to hear that the little daughter, born under such lamentable circumstances, lived to grow up into a beautiful and gifted woman, brightened her father's house during all his lifetime, and died—happily not long before her much-tried and patient mother.

Irving remained in Kirkcaldy about a week after this sad event; during which time he occupied himself, "in gratitude for the comfort he had himself received," as it is pathetically said, in visiting all who were sorrowful in his father-in-law's congregation. Then, leaving his wife to perfect her slow and sad recovery in her father's house, until she and the new-born infant, now doubly precious, were fit to travel, he went away sadly by himself, to seek comfort and strength in a solitary journey on foot—an apostolical journey, in which he carried his Master's message from house to house, along the way—to his father's house in Annan. Mrs. Irving and her child remained for some time in Scotland; and to this circumstance we owe a closer and more faithful picture of Irving's life and heart than anything which a biographer could attempt; than anything, indeed, which, so far as I am aware, any man of modern days has left behind him.

CHAPTER XI.

JOURNAL.

THE correspondence which follows needs neither introduction nor comment. No one who reads it will need to be told how remarkable it is. It was Irving's first long separation from his wife, and his heart was opened and warmed by that touch of mutual sorrow which gives a more exquisite closeness to all love. This perfect revelation of a man's heart, and of a husband's trust and confidence, is given by permission of the remaining children of his house. It will be seen to begin from the time of his leaving Kirkcaldy, after the sorrows above recorded.

"Annan, 18th October, 1825.

"MY DEAREST WIFE,—I am grieved that I should have missed this day's post, by the awkwardness of the hour of making up the bag at noon precisely, beyond which I was carried, before I knew that it was past, by the many spiritual duties to which I felt called in my father's house and my sister's. . . . But I know my dear Isabella will not grieve half so much on this account as I have done myself. . . . And now, having parted with all the household, I sit down here, at the solemn hour of midnight, to write you how it is with me, and has been since I left you, first praying that this may find you and our dear babe as I left you, increased in strength.

"Andrew bore me company to Peebles, and will inform you of my journey so far. We parted at two o'clock on the south

side of Peebles Bridge, and I took my solitary way up Glen Sark, calling at every shepherd's house along my route, to obtain an opportunity of admonishing mother and children of their mortality, and so proceeded till I set my face to climb the hill which you must pass to get out of the glen. In ascending which, I had the sight and feeling of a new phenomenon among the mountains, a terrible hail-storm, which swept down the side of the opposite mountain, and came upon me with such a violence as required all my force of hand and foot to keep erect, obliterating my meagre path, and leaving me in the wildest mountain, wholly at a non-plus, to steer my way; until the sun breaking out, or rather streaking the west with a bright light, I found myself holding right east instead of south, and night threatening to be upon me before I could clear the unknown wild. I was lonely enough; but, committing my way unto the Lord, I held south as nearly as I could guess, and reached the solitary house in the head of another water, of which Sam may recollect something; where, forgathering with a shepherd, I got directions, and set my breast against Black-house heights, and reached my old haunts on Douglas Burn, where, in answer to the apostolic benediction which I carried everywhere, I received a kindly offer of tea, night's lodging, then a horse to carry me through the wet, all of which in my haste refusing, I took my way over the rough grounds which lie between that and Dryhope by Loch St. Mary. My adventures here with the Inverness-shire herds and the dogs of Dryhope Tower (a perfect colony, threatening to devour me with open mouth), I cannot go into, and leave it to the discourse of the lip. Here I waded the Yarrow at the foot of the loch, under the crescent moon, where, finding a convenient rock beneath some overhanging branches which moaned and sighed in the breeze, I sat me down, while the wind, sweeping, brought the waters of the loch to my feet; and I paid my devotions to the Lord in His own ample and magnificent temple; and sweet meditations were afforded me of thee, our babe, and our departed boy. My soul was filled with sweetness. 'I did not ask for a sign,' as Colonel Blackadder says; but when I looked up to the moon, as I came out from the ecclesia of the rock, she looked as never a moon had

looked before in my eye,—as if she had been washed in dew, which, speedily clearing off, she looked so bright and beautiful; and on the summit of the opposite hill a little bright star gleamed upon me, like the bright, bright eye of our darling. Oh, how I wished you had been with me to partake the sweet solacement of that moment! Of my adventure with the shepherd-boy Andrew, whose mother's sons were all squandered abroad among the shepherds, and our prayer upon the edge of the mountain, and my welcome at the cottage, and cold reception at the farm-house, I must also be silent, till the living pen shall declare them unto you. Only, I had trial of an Apostolic day and night, and slept sweetly, after blessing my wife and child. Next day I passed over to the grave of Boston, at Ettrick, where I ministered in the manse to the minister's household, and tracked my way up into Eskdale, where, after conversing with the martyr's tomb (Andrew Hyslop's), I reached the Ware about half an hour after George, who had brought a gig up to Grange, and from that place had crossed the moor to meet me; and by returning upon his steps, we reached home about eleven o'clock. But such weather! I was soaked, the case of my desk was utterly dissolved, and the mechanical ingenuity of Annan is now employed constructing another. But I am well, very well; and for the first time have made proof of an Apostolical journey, and found it to be very, very sweet and profitable. Whether I have left any seed that will grow, the Lord only knows.

"Many, many are the tender and loving sympathies towards you which are here expressed, and many the anxious wishes for your welfare and hope of seeing you, when, without danger, you can undertake it. . . . . I shall never forget, and never repay, the tender attentions of all your dear father's household to me and mine. The Lord remember them with the love He beareth to His own. I affectionately, most affectionately, salute them all. . . . . The Lord comfort and foster your spirit. The Lord enrich our darling, and make her a Mary to us. . . . .

"Your most affectionate husband,

"EDWARD IRVING."

"Carlisle, 21st October, 1825.

"My dear Isabella,—Thus far I am arrived safely, and find that my seat is taken out in the London mail to-morrow evening at seven o'clock. I left all my father's family in good health, full of affection to me, and, I trust, not without faith and love towards God. Mr. Fergusson and Margaret and the two eldest boys came down from Dumfries on Wednesday, and added much to our domestic enjoyment, which, but for the pain of parting so soon, was as complete as ever I had felt it; for, though my heart was very cold, I persevered, by the force, I fear, rather of strong resolution than of spiritual affection, to set before them their duties to God and to the souls of their children. They spoke all very tenderly of you, and feel much for your weal, and long for the time when they shall be able to comfort you in person. Thomas Carlyle came down to-day, and edified me very much with his discourse. Dr. Duncan came down with C—— M——, who, poor lad, seems fast hastening into one of the worst forms of Satanic pride. He desires solitude, he says, and hates men.

"Your short pencilled note was like honey to my soul; and though I have not had the outpouring of soul for you, little baby, and myself which I desire, I hope the Lord will enable me this night to utter my spiritual affections before His throne. I am an unworthy man — a poor, miserable servant, — unworthy to be a doorkeeper; how unworthy to be a minister at the altar of His house! I shall write you when I reach London. Till then may the Lord be your defence, my dear lamb's nourishment and strength, Mary's encouragement, and the sustenance of your unworthy head. Rest you, my dear, and be untroubled till the Lord restore your health; then cease not to meditate upon, and to seek the improvement of our great trial, which may I never forget, and as oft as I remember, exercise an act of submission unto the will of God. This is written at the fire of the public room among my fellow-travellers. The Laird of Dornoch, Tristram Lowther the wilful, where I waited for the coach, expressed a great desire that, when you came to the country, you would visit him. . . . .

"Your true and faithful husband,

"Edward Irving."

" Myddelton Terrace, 25th October, 1825.

"My dear Wife, beloved in the Lord,—I bless you and our little child, and pray that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with you and all the house.

"I reached London late (eleven o'clock) on Saturday night, by the good preservation of God,—to which, when I sought at times to turn the minds of my fellow-travellers, I seemed unto them as one that mocked; but though we were a graceless company, we were preserved by the Lord. On our journey there occurred nothing remarkable except one thing which, for its singular hospitality, I resolved to recount to you. Our road lay through Rutlandshire, and half way between Uppingham and Kettering, there appeared before us, on the top of a hill, an ancient building, but not like any castle which I had ever seen before,—being low and irregular, and covering a deal of ground, and built, you would say, more for hospitality and entertainment than strength. I make no doubt, from the form of the structure, it is as old as the Saxon times, and belonged to one of those franklins of whom Walter Scott speaks in 'Ivanhoe.' . . . . Now mark, when our road, swinging up the hill, came to the gate of this mansion, which was a simple gate,—not a hold, or any imitation of a hold, of strength—to my astonishment, the guard of the mail descended and opened the gate, and in we drove to the park and gate of the castle, where they were cutting wood into billets, which were lying in heaps, for the sake of the poor in the village beneath the hill. One of these billets they laid in the wheel of the coach, for the hill is very steep; and while I meditated what all this might mean, thinking it was some service they were going to do for the family, out came from a door of the castle a very kindly-looking man, bearing in a basket bread and cheese, and in his hand a pitcher full of ale, of which he kindly invited us all to partake, and of which we all partook most heartily, for it was now past noon, and we had travelled far since breakfast—from Nottingham. . . . So here I paid my last farewell to ale, and am now a Nazarite to the sense. Oh, that the Lord would make me a Nazarite indeed from all lusts of the flesh! . . . . Remember this hospitable lord in your prayers. He is my Lord Londes, and his

place is Rockingham Castle. The Mail-coach hath this privilege from him at all times, and, I understand, during the great fall of snow, he took the passengers in, and entertained them for several days, until they were able to get forward.

"I arrived, I say, at eleven o'clock, and Alexander Hamilton was waiting for me at the Angel, with whom I walked to this house of mourning, and found Hall getting better, and all things prepared by his worthy wife for my comfort. So here I am resolved to abide, and meditate my present trials and widowhood for a time. But I forget not, morning and evening, to bless you, and our dear little lamb, and Mary our faithful servant, and to sue for blessings to you all from the Lord; and truly I feel very lonely to ascend those stairs, and lie down upon my lonely bed. But the Lord filled me with some strong consolations when I thought that a spirit calling me father, and thee mother, might now be ministering at His throne. I do not remember ever being so uplifted in soul. Yesterday I travailed much in spirit for the people, and preached to them with a full heart; that is, compared with myself; but measured by the rule of Christian love, how poor, how cold, how sinful! This morning I have had the younger Sottomayor* with me. Would you cause inquiries to be made what likelihood there is of his succeeding as a Spanish teacher in Edinburgh? . . . . Before setting out, I resolved to write you, however briefly, that your heart might be comforted; for are not you my chief comfort? and ought not I to be yours, according to my ability? I assure you, all

* This was one of two brothers, Spaniards, the elder of whom had been abbot of a monastery, and had more than once been intrusted with missions to Rome. He had been enlightened by a copy of the Bible in the library of his convent, and after a while had been obliged to flee from the terrors of the Inquisition. He could speak scarcely any English, but was kindly helped to acquire it by the ladies of Mr. Irving's family. The younger was a soldier, brought to Protestantism as much by love for his brother as by love for the truth. Irving exerted himself in behalf of both, and treated them with great and constant kindness. The abbé married a lady whose confessor he had been, and whom he had insensibly led into his own views, and, as a consequence, into persecution—but died early, leaving his widow to the protection of his devoted brother.

the people were glad to see me back again, and condoled with us with a great grief. The Lord bless them with all consolations in their day of affliction. The church was as usual very crowded, and I had much liberty of utterance granted me of the Lord. . . . . I desire my love to your dear father and mother, and my most dutiful obedience as a son of their house. My brotherly affection to all your sisters, who were parents to our Edward; and to our brothers, who loved him as their own bowels. Oh, forget not any of you the softening chastisement of the Lord. Walk in His fear, and let your hearts be comforted.

"Your most affectionate husband and pastor of your soul,

"EDWARD IRVING."

"Say to Mary: 'Pray for the Comforter, even the Spirit of truth,' which proceedeth from the Father.'"

After his arrival in London, his letters take the form of a journal, commenced as follows:—

"Let me now endeavour to express, for the information of my dear wife, and for her consolation under our present sore trial, and for the entertainment of her present separation from me, and the gratification of all her spousal affections, and, by the grace of God, for the building up of her faith in Christ, and her love towards her husband, whatever hath occurred to the experience of my soul this day, and whatever hath occupied my thoughts in this my study, and whatever hath engaged my activity out of doors; and for her sake may the Lord grant me a faithful memory and a true utterance.

"26*th*.—This morning I arose a little after seven o'clock, in possession of my reason and of my health, and not without aspirations of soul towards the communion of God; but poor and heartless when compared with those experiences of the Psalmist, whose

prayers prevented the dawning of the morning, and his meditations the night-watches; and my soul being afflicted with the downwardness, and wandering of spirit, and coldness of heart, towards the God of my salvation, in the morning, which is as it were a new resurrection, it was borne in upon my mind that it arose in a great measure from my not realising with abiding constancy the Mediator between me and God, but breaking through, as it were, to commune with Him in my own strength—whereby the lightning did scathe my soul, or rather my soul abode in its barrenness, unwatered from the living fountain, in its slavery unredeemed by the Captain of my salvation, who will be acknowledged before He will bless us, or rather who must be honoured in order that we may stand well in the sight of the Father. When the family were assembled to prayers in the little library (our family consists at present of Mrs. Hall, her niece, a sweet young woman out of Somersetshire, and a servant maid, and Hall, who is not able to come down stairs till afternoon), Miss Dalzell* and her sister came in to consult me concerning the unsuitable behaviour of one of the Sabbath school teachers, who was becoming a scandal unto the rest of the teachers, and had been a sore trouble to her, and whom Satan was moving to trouble the general peace of the Society. Under which affliction, having given her what present comfort the Lord enabled me, I refrained from any positive deliverance, or even hinting any idea, till the matter should come before our committee—against which may the Lord grant me and

* A lady who had been the means of establishing a system of local Sabbath schools.

all the teachers the spirit of wise counsel to meet and defeat this device of the Evil One. How the tares grow up among the wheat in every society, and, alas! in every heart! The Lord root them out of my soul, though the pain be sore as the plucking out a right eye or a right hand. After worship and breakfast I composed myself to read out of a book of old pamphlets concerning the Revolution, one which contains a minute journal of the expedition of the Prince of Orange, for the Protestant cause, into England, from the day of his setting out to the day of his coronation; which, written as it is in a spiritual and biblical style, brought more clear convictions to my mind that this passage of history is as wonderful a manifestation of God's arm as any event in the history of the Jews; being the judgment of the Stewarts, the reward of the Orange house, the liberation of the sealed nation from its idolatrous oppressors, and the beginning of the humiliation of France, which went on for a century and was consummated in the Revolution, of which the remote cause was in the expensive wars of Louis XIV., exhausting the finances, and causing Louis XVI. to be a 'raiser of taxes,' according to Daniel's prophecy. Oh, that some one would follow the history of the Christian Church, and embody it in chronicles in the spirit of the books of Samuel! There is no presumption, surely, in giving a spiritual account of that which we know from the prophecies to be under spiritual administration. Afterwards I addressed myself to Bishop Overall's Convocation book, concerning the government of the Catholic Church and the kingdoms of the whole world, which digests, under short chapters, the history of God's reve-

lation, and appends a canon to each. In the first twenty-two of which chapters and canons I was astonished to find the full declaration of what had been dawning upon my mind, viz. that the maxim, which since Locke's time has been the basis of all government, 'that all power is derived from the people, and held of the people for the people's good,' is in truth the basis of all revolution and radicalism, and the dissolution of all government; and that governors and judges, of whatever name, hold their place and authority of God for ends discovered in His Word, even as people yield obedience to laws and magistrates by the same highest authority. Also it pleased me to find how late sprung is the notion among our levelling dissenters, that the magistrate hath no power in the Church, and how universal was the notion among the reformers and divines that the magistrate is bound to put down idolatry and will-worship, and provide for the right religious instruction of the people. That subject of toleration needs to be reconsidered; the liberals have that question wholly their own way, and therefore I know that there must be error in it; for where Satan is, there is confusion and every evil work.

"I went out into the garden to walk before dinner, and with difficulty refrained my tears to think how oft and with what sweet delight I had borne my dear, dear boy along that walk, with my dear wife at my side; but had faith given me to see his immortality in another world, and rest satisfied with my Maker's will. Sir Peter Lawrie called after dinner, and besought me, as indeed have many, to go and live with him; but nothing shall tempt me from this sweet soli-

tude of retirement, and activity of consolation, and ministry to the afflicted. . . . . When he was gone I went forth upon my outdoor ministry, and as I walked to Mr. Whyte's, along the terraces overlooking those fields where we used to walk, three in one, I was sore, sore distressed, and found the temptation to 'idolatry of the memory;' which the Lord delivered me from—at the same time giving the clue to the subject which has been taking form in my mind lately, to be treated as arising out of my trial; and the form in which it presented itself is 'the idolatry of the affections,' which will embrace the whole evil, the whole remedy, and the sound condition of all relations. I proceeded to Mrs. S., and, being somewhat out of spirits, was tempted of Satan to return, but having been of late much exercised upon the necessity of implicit obedience to the will of God, I hastened to proceed, and was richly rewarded in an interview with the mother and daughter, wherein my mouth was opened, as was their heart, and I trust seed was sown which will bear fruit. Then I returned home through the churchyard, full of softness of heart. . . . . Upon my return home I addressed myself to a discourse upon the text, 'To me to live is Christ, and to die gain,' until the hour of evening prayer, when I gathered my little flock, and having commended all our spirits and all our beloved ones to the Father of mercies, we parted,—they to their couches, where I trust they now sleep in peace; I to this sweet office of affection, which I now close with the deep closing knell of St. Paul's sounding twelve in my ear. My beloved Isabella, you are sleeping upon your pillow; the God of Jacob make it rich and

divine as the pillow of Padanaram! My little darling, thou art resting on thy mother's bosom; the Lord make thee unto us what Isaac was to Abraham and Sarah! Farewell, my beloved!

"27*th October*.—I am so worn out with work that I fear it is a vain undertaking to which I now address myself, of giving some account of the day's transactions to my dear wife. I began the day with a sweet exercise of private devotion, wherein the Lord gave me more than usual composure of soul; and having descended, we read together the fourth chapter of Job, and prayed earnestly that the Lord would enable us to fulfil His will; at and after breakfast I read the seventy-third Psalm in Hebrew, and in the Greek New Testament the first chapter of Hebrews. After which I went to my solitary walk in the garden, and was exercised with many thoughts which came clothed in a cloud, but passed encircled with a rainbow. As I walked I employed myself in committing to memory some Hebrew roots. Having returned to my study, I addressed myself to read two or three additional chapters and canons in the Convocation book, and am a good deal shaken concerning the right of subjects to take arms against their sovereign. Thereafter I laboured at my discourse, in the composition of which I find a new style creeping upon me, whether for the better or for the worse I know not; but this I know, that I seek more and more earnestly to be a tongue unto the Holy Spirit. My dinner being ended I returned to my readings, and sought to entertain my mind with a volume of my book of ancient voyages, which delights me with its simplicity. I had a call from Mr. M——, and Dr.

M—— with him. I was enabled to be very faithful, and I trust with some good effect. . . . . Then I went to church to meet my young communicants, and the spiritual part of my people. But of all that passed, sweet and profitable, I am unable to write, with difficulty forming my thoughts into these feeble words. The Lord send refreshing sleep to my dear wife and little babe, and to His servant, who has the satisfaction of having wearied himself in His service. Farewell!

"28*th October, Thursday*.—This day, my best beloved, has been to me a day of activity and not of study, feeling it necessary to lie by and refresh my head, whose faintness or feebleness hindered my spirit from expressing itself last night to its beloved mate. My visions of the night were of our dearly beloved boy, whose death I thought all a mistake or falsehood, and that he was among our hands still; but this illusion was accompanied with such prayers and refreshings of soul, and all so hallowed, that I awoke out of it nowise disappointed with the sad reality; and having arisen, I addressed myself to the cleansing of body and soul, and especially besought the Lord for simple and implicit obedience to His holy will, of which prayer, methinks, I have this day experienced the sweet and gracious answer. At family prayers and breakfast there assembled Mr. Hamilton, our brother: Mr. Darling, one of the flock, who came to consult concerning the schools, for which they wish a collection, to which I am the more disposed that all other means have failed; Mr. Thompson, the preacher who visited us at Kirkcaldy, and came to present me with his little religious novel of *The Martyr*, a tale of the first century;

opus perdifficile; Mr. M——, curate of our parish of Clerkenwell, who came to commune with me concerning Sottomayor and the affairs of the parish, a man of zeal, but I fear not of much wisdom, yet devoted to the Lord; Mr. Johnstone, a young lawyer from Alnwick, four years an inmate of Pears' house*, a Christian likewise, but of the Radical or Dissenting-for-dissenting-sake school;—I trust men of God: and a sweet thought it is to me that the Lord should encompass my table with His servants. For whose entertainment Mrs. Hall (best and frugallest of housekeepers) had prepared a ham and other eatables, with which, and tea, not over strong, we were well pleased and thankful to satisfy our hunger. After breakfast we set out (which had been projected between Mr. Hamilton and me) to see the walls of the new church, arising out of the earth in massive strength to more than the height of a man, where we found Mr. Dinwiddie, with his daughters, of whom he would not allow one to go to Edinburgh on a visit of months without having seen it, to carry the reports of our work. This careful elder having pointed to Mr. Hamilton the remissness of the overseer to be on his post betimes, we proceeded to the city; I to visit the flock, they to their honest callings. In Mr. H——'s hospitium of business, and general rendezvous of Caledonian friends, I wrote for Elizabeth Dinwiddie a letter of pastoral commendation to Mrs. Gordon, through whom, wife of my heart and sharer of my joys, you will find her out if you should be resident in the city. In the room of shawls, muslin, and muslin-boxes, which

* The school-house at Abbotshall, Kirkcaldy, referred to in Chapter IV.

your father found cool as the refreshing zephyrs, there were four Greeks, negotiating with Alexander, by the universal language of the exchange, the ten digits, for one other common sign had they not. They were small, strong, well-built fellows, turbaned, with black hair curling from beneath high skull-caps: and yet, I think, though they had fire in their look, one or two English seamen carry as much battle in their resolute faces as did these four outlandish mariners. But I hastened to another conflict,—the conflict of sorrow and sickness, in the house of our dear brother David, whose hurt in his head threatens him grievously. . . . . In my first visit I liked the complexion of his sickness, ill; he was then so moved and over-acted by my visit, that we judged it best that I should not have an interview with him. He had spoken much and delightfully to his excellent wife. . . . . I gathered the family together, and having spoken to them, we had a season of prayer. From whence I proceeded to Mr. L——, in order to exhort him and his wife concerning their children, and especially concerning the Sacrament of Baptism, which they sought for the youngest, two months old. They are two saints, as I judge, and our communing was sweet. Thence I passed to Whitecross Street, in order to visit an old couple, Alexander M—— and his wife (he whom we got into the pension society). They are sadly tried with two sons, one of whom has fits of madness; the other, according to his father's account, 'has caught the fever of the day,' become infidel, which he tells me is amazingly spread amongst the tradesmen. Having exhorted them to zeal and steadfastness, I passed on to Sottomayor's, whom I found correcting a Spanish

translation of Doddridge's 'Rise and Progress;' and after much sweet discourse—for, dear Isabella, he proves well—his wife came up, and he interpreted between us. She is perplexed most to give up the honour of the Virgin—I should say the idolatry of the Virgin. I prayed with them, as in every other place, and hastened home, expecting letters from my Isabella, which I found not, at Pentonville. Thence I passed, peeping at the book-stalls, and sometimes going a step out of my way, but purchasing nothing, though sore tempted with St. Bernard's works, until I reached Bedford Square, where I found the two proof-sheets with the letter, which was like water to my soul. But one o'clock has struck. William Hamilton came at six, when we went to Sir Peter's. . . . . After which, returning home with sweet discourse, I assembled my family, and when I prayed there wept one, I know not which (may they be tears of penitence and contrition!); and having supped upon my cup of milk and slice of toast, I have wrought at this sweet occupation till this early hour. And now, with a husband's and a father's blessing upon my sleeping treasures,—a master's blessing on my faithful servant, and a son and brother's upon all your house,—I go to commit myself to the arms of Him who slumbers not nor sleeps. Farewell.

"*Walthamstow, 29th, Friday.*—This morning, my dear Isabella, I excused myself a little longer rest, by the lateness of my home-returning last night and my weariness, which you will observe is not right, for unless there be some fixed hour there can be no regularity, of which the great use is to form a restraint upon our wilfulness. Moreover, I always find that the work of

the Lord proceeds with me during the day according to my readiness to serve Him in the morning. Oh, when shall my eyes prevent the morning, that I might meditate in His law or lift up my soul unto His throne! After our morning prayers, our friend Mr. W. came in, much grieved in spirit by the vexations of the world, and the mistreatments of one whom he thought his friend. But I told him that his faith was unremoved and unremovable, and his wife and children spared to him, and daily bread furnished out to them; therefore, he ought not so sadly to grieve himself. . . . . I addressed myself to my main occupation of preparing food for my people, beginning a lecture upon the first three verses of the eighth chapter of Luke, which I sought to introduce by giving a sketch, chiefly taken from the preceding chapter, of what kind His ministry was likely to be in these cities. In which I think I had no small liberty granted to my mind and to my pen, for which I had earnestly besought the Lord in the morning. And having well exhausted myself by about one o'clock, and brought the discourse to a resting place, I judged I could not do better than gather my implements and walk over to Walthamstow, that I might have the more time with our afflicted friends. . . . I pursued my road alone, reflecting much upon the emptiness of all our expectations, and the transitoriness of all our enjoyments, seeing that the last time I travelled that way, I had pleased myself with having found a road through the park, by which you and I and dear Edward might oft walk out of a summer eve to see our friends; and now little Edward and our esteemed friend are in the dust. Be it so. I praise the Lord for

His goodness, and so do you, my dearest wife. I found our dear friends as I could have wished. . . . . Having assembled the family, and encouraged them to stand fast in the Lord, and see His wonders, we joined in worship, and the ladies retired, leaving me in this room, dear, and sitting in the spot where our friend used so cheerfully to entertain us. . . . . Oh, Isabella, my soul is sometimes stirred up, and sometimes languishes with much faintness, yet with a very faint as well as a very fervent cry, I will entreat Him that I may be wholly His, in my strength and in my weakness. I pray for you all continually. I bless you and our dear babe night and morning, not forgetting Mary, whom I entreat to advance, and not to go back. . . . . Now, my dearest, how glad should we be that the fresh, free air of our house was eminently serviceable to Hull, with whom it might have gone very hard in his confined place. The servant is now about to leave us; and then we are Hall, his wife, his wife's cousin, three most worthy people. . . . . So be wholly at rest, my dearest, concerning my comfort, and regulate your time wholly by consideration for your health and dear Margaret's. The solitude does me good. It teaches me my blessedness in such a wife, which I have much forgotten, but now, thank God, forget not. . . . . But time hastens, and my eyes grow heavy and my conceptions dull. The Lord, who preserved the Virgin and the Blessed Babe on their journey to Egypt, preserve my wife and babe, and bring them in safety to their home, and their home in my heart. This night may His arms be around you, and soft and gentle sleep seal your eyelids, and when you awake, may you be with Him. Amen.

"29*th*, *Saturday*.—

"'Long have I viewed, long have I thought,
And trembling held the bitter draught;
But now resolved and firm I'll be,
Since 'tis prepared and mixed by Thee.

"'I'll trust my great Physician's skill,
What He prescribes can ne'er be ill;
No longer will I groan or pine,
Thy pleasure 'tis — it shall be mine.

"'Thy medicine oft produces smart,
Thou wound'st me in the tenderest part;
All that I prized below is gone;
Yet, Father, still Thy will be done.

"'Since 'tis Thy sentence I shall part
With what is nearest to my heart;
My little all I here resign,
And lo! my heart itself is Thine.

"'Take all, Great God. I will not grieve,
But wish I still had more to give;
I hear Thy voice, Thou bid'st me quit
This favour'd gourd: and I submit.'

"These lines, my dearest, were brought in for the consolation of Mrs. I—— by the two pious sisters in whom our departed friend used to rejoice so much. I thought them so pious and obedient in their spirit that I immediately copied them out for the consolation of Edward's mother. Dear Isabella, if the fruit of our marriage had been no more than to give birth and being to so sweet a spirit, I would bless the Lord that He had ever given you to my arms.

"I am in Dr. M——'s back dining-room, so far on my way home. . . . So, to place myself in the sweetest company which the world possesses for me, I have taken my pen in hand. I know not how it is, my dear, that

I find not the communion I looked for in the company of Mrs. I——. Her mind is fidgety or flighty; I know not which. . . . So it is with me also, and with all others who nourish their own will in its hidden places. An evidence, my dear, of those who nourish their own will, is the carelessness which they have in expressing their thought, and manifesting it to others. Being manifest to themselves, they stop short, and heed not the further revealing it. How this has been my character, and that of Mrs. I——! Hence our inability to enter into communion; for communion implies one common, not two several minds. The true access and assurance of good society* is the communion of the Holy Spirit, which if you cultivate, my beloved wife, it will be well for you in all relations, and so also for me. As Christ is the author of all true regulation of the mind or understanding, or reason, so the Holy Ghost is the author of all true love and affection and communion, out of which all forms of society spring. But for Miss B——, I think her, so far as I can judge, a faithful and true disciple of the Lord; rather, perhaps, over-theological, and not enough practised in the inward obedience of the mind. Oh, my dearest, this obedience is the perfection of the Christian,—obedience in the thought, obedience in the feeling, obedience in the action. Think much of this, for it is *true, true!* As I came over these fields and marshes, and by that running water, there revived in me some effeminate feelings, which convince me that there is an intimate connection between the softer and more luxurious forms of nature, and the

* Irving uses this word in the Scotch sense — good *company*, fellowship. The social faculty is evidently what he means.

softer passions of the mind; for I am never visited with any such fleshly thoughts when moving through the mountains and wilds of my native country; and to my judgment this tendency of visible beauty, variety, and richness, to cultivate the sensual part of our nature, which obscures the intellectual and moral, is the true account that, being left to themselves without religion, the people of the plains sink into lethargy and luxury of soul far sooner than the people of the mountains. The eye hath more to do with the flesh than any other sense, although they be all its vile ministers. Oh, when shall I be delivered from these base bonds? When shall I desire to be delivered, and loath them with my soul?

"Dr. M. interrupted me, and I now write by my fireside, whither the Lord has conducted me again in safety, preparing all things for my reception. I have finished both my discourses, and have had a season of discourse and prayer with the three women whose tears are the tokens of their emotion. Oh, that they may be saved! . . Dr. M—— pleases me not a little. He is an exact, but formal man, yet he seems to possess more insight into theology than I had thought. One discourse was profitable, and full of argument. The University* makes progress, and the goodnatured Doctor thinks he has mellowed them into the adoption of some measure defensive of religion. He pleases himself with the thought that Dr. Cox can do everything or anything with Brougham. 'The man who thinks he hath Brougham captive hath

* London University, which was then being established, and which, in consequence of the exclusion of religion, Irving strenuously opposed.

caught a Tartar. He has more of the whirlpool quality in him than any man I have met with; and he careth not for wisdom, but for power only.' These were some of my exclamations in the midst of the Doctor's simplicity. Observe, Isabella, that the philosopher, or lover of wisdom, is a grade higher than the lovers of power, or the monarchs who have reached it. Hence, when a truly great man chances to be a king, he desires wisdom moreover, as Alfred did, and others after, as Justinian and Napoleon; but no philosopher ever cared to be a king. Pythagoras, or Plato, or Socrates, for instance. There are no philosophers now-a-days, because they are all ambitious of power or eminence. Even Basil Montagu is desirous of power,—that is, his own will; and Coleridge is desirous of power,—that is, the goodwill of others, or the idolatry of himself. The Christian is both priest and king, a minister of wisdom and a possessor of power. The rest I leave to your own reflections. I had much earnest discourse with Mr. T——, on our way home, concerning his vocation. The Lord be his defence. And now, Edward Irving, another day hath passed over thy head, and hast thou occupied the time well? Art thou worthy of to-morrow? I have passed the day amiss, and am not worthy of to-morrow. I have been in communion with myself. I have loved myself better than another. I know not whether I have been altogether temperate; and yet will I praise the Lord, for I have prayed oft, and I have written my discourses in a spiritual frame of mind. But, oh! my meditations, why centre ye at home so much? Now may the Lord prepare me for to-morrow's holy dawn, and all my people, and give

me strength to beget one unto Christ, whom I may call *my son!* How doth my sweet daughter, my dear child? Thou seed of an immortal! the Lord make light thy swaddling band, and salvation thy swathing round about thee! And thou, my most excellent wife! when shall these eyes behold thee, and these lips call thee blessed, and these arms embrace thee? In the Lord's good time. When Thou judgest it to be best, oh my God, direct them to a good time, and conduct them by a healthy way. Thou doest all things well. And this night encircle them with Thy arm where they lie, and bless the house where they dwell for their sake. Make my wife like the ancient women, and my child like the seed of the Fathers of Thy Church. And, oh! that Thy servant might be held in remembrance by the generation of the godly. Bless also Thine handmaiden, our faithful servant. Even so, my family, let the blessing of God encompass us all.

"*Sunday*, 30*th*.—This has been to me a day to be held in remembrance, my dearest wife, for the strength with which the Lord hath endowed me to manifest his truth. I pray it may be a day to be remembered for the strength with which He hath endowed many of my people to conceive truth and bring forth its fruitfulness. In the morning I arose before eight, and having sought to purify myself by prayer for the sanctification of the Sabbath, I came down to the duties of my family—but before passing out of my bed-chamber, let me take warning, and admonish my dear Isabella how necessary it is for the first opening of our eyelids upon the sweet light of the morning to open the eye of our soul upon its blessed light, which is Christ, otherwise the tempter will

carry us away to look upon some vanity or folly in the kingdom of this world, and so divert our souls as that, when they come to lift themselves up to God, they shall find no concentration of spirit upon God, no sweet flow of holy desires, no strong feeling of want to extort supplication or groanings of soul — so that we shall have complainings of absence instead of consolations of His holy presence; barrenness and leanness for faithfulness and beauty. So, alas, I found it in the morning, but the Lord heard the voice of my crying, and sent me this instruction, which may He enable me and my dear wife to profit from in the time to come. After our family worship, in which I read the first Chapter of the Hebrews, as preparatory to reading it in the church, Mr. Dinwiddie, our worthy and venerable elder, came in as usual, and we joined in prayer for the blessing of the Lord upon the ministry of the Word this day throughout all the churches, and especially in the church and congregation given into our hand; whereupon he departed, having some preparations to make before the service, and I went alone, meditating upon that first of Hebrews, which has occupied my thoughts so much all the week. We began by singing the first six verses of the forty-fifth Psalm, whose reference to Messiah I shortly instructed the people to bear in mind. In prayer I found much liberty, especially in confession of sin and humiliation of soul, for the people seemed bowed down, very still and silent, and full of solemnity — then, having read the first of Hebrews, I told them that it was the epistle for instructing them in the person and offices of Christ as our mediator, both priest and king; but that it wholly bore upon the present being of the man

Christ Jesus, from the time that he was begotten from the dead, not upon his former being, from eternity before He became flesh, which was best to be understood from the Gospel by John; but for the new character which He had acquired by virtue of His incarnation and resurrection, and the relations in which He stood to the Church and to the world, this epistle is the great fountain of knowledge, though, at the same time, it throws much light upon His eternal Sonship and divinity, by the way of allusion and acknowledgment in passing; that the purpose of the epistle was to satisfy the believing Hebrews, who were terribly assailed and tempted by their unbelieving brethren, and confirm them in the superiority of Christ to Moses as a law-giver, to Aaron and the Levitical priesthood as a priest, and to angels, through whose ministry they believed that the law was given, as the Apostle himself teacheth in his Epistle to the Galatians. And therefore he opens with great dignity the solemn discourse by connecting Christ with all the prophets, and exalts Him above all rank and comparison by declaring His inheritance, His workmanship, His prerogative of representing God, of upholding the universe, of purging our sins by Himself, and sitting at the right hand of the majesty on high. Then, addressing himself to his work, he demonstrates His superiority to angels, in order, not to the adjustment of His true dignity — which he had already made peerless — but to the exaltation of the dispensation which He brought, above the former which was given by angels. This demonstration he makes by reference to psalms, which, by the belief of all the Jewish Church, from the earliest times, were understood of Messiah, which

quotations, however, far surpass, infinitely surpass, the purpose for which they are quoted, placing Him, each one, on a level with God, to us, at least, to whom that doctrine hath been otherwise revealed. But those Psalms looking forward to *Messiah's* glory can consequently have only an application posterior to the time that He was Messiah, and that He was Messiah in humility. Therefore, the 'this day' is the day either of His birth or of His ascension, the 'first-begotten' is from the dead, and the 'kingdom' is the kingdom purchased by His obedience unto the death; and hence the reason given for His exaltation is, because He hath loved righteousness and hated iniquity. These trains of reasoning and quotation being concluded, I challenged them to remark the sublimity of that from the 102nd Psalm, and thence took occasion to rebuke them very sharply for going after idolatries of profane poets, and fictitious novelists, and meagre sentimentalists, who are Satan's prophets, and wear his livery of malice, and falsehood, and mocking merriment, while they forsook the prophets of the Lord, and their sublime, pathetic, true, wise, and everlasting forms of discourse. Then, having begun with a prayer that the Lord would make the reading of this Epistle effectual to the confirming their faith in Christ's character, offices, and work, and possessing them of the efficacy thereof, I concluded with a prayer that the Lord would enlarge our souls by that powerful word which had now been preached to us of His great grace.

"Then we sung the last verses of the 102nd Psalm, and prayed in the words of the Lord. The sermon*

* This wonderful *résumé* of the day's services will give a better

was from Phil. i. 21; to which I introduced their attention by explaining my object to show them the way to possess and be assured of that victory over death, of which, last Lord's day, I showed them the great achievement (Cor. xv. 55—57); then, having, in a few sentences, embodied Paul's sublime dilemma between living and dying, I joined earnest battle with the subject, and set to work to explain the life that was Christ, which I drew out of Gal. ii. 20, to consist in a total loss of personality and self, and surrender of all our being unto Him who had purchased us with His blood, leaving us no longer 'our own'—which condition of being, though it seem ideal and unattainable, is nothing else than the obedience of the first great commandment, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c.'; since to be so identified, and at one with Christ, was only to be wholly in love with, and obedient to, the Father. Now this condition of life must insure to all who have reached to it, the same grace at death which Christ, the man Christ, the Messiah, by His resurrection, attained to — or, if not wholly at death, partially then, and wholly at the resurrection. For I argued from the 2nd of the Hebrews, that whatever Christ attained to, His people attained to, and also from all the promises in the 2nd and 3rd of the Revelations to those who overcome. This gave me great purchase upon the subject, allowing me the whole scope of the contrast between Christ's humiliation and ex-

idea than any description of the lengthened and engrossing character of these discourses, into which the preacher went with his whole soul and heart: and of the extraordinary fascination which could hold his audience interested through exercises so long, close, and solemn.

altation; which having wrought according to my gift, I then proceeded to show the vanity of any lower estimate of the life which is 'Christ' by touching many popular errors, such as place it in a sound faith merely, or in a correct morality; or in a religious conformity, against which having opposed the universality and unreservedness of obedience, the thoroughness of redemption, and the perfectness of regeneration, I told them, and warned them, of sad misgivings on a death-bed, of desperate fears and hoodwinkings of the conscience, showing them that the believer could not die hard, like the unbeliever, or brutified, like the carnalist; and I prayed them, when these doubtings came upon them, to remember that this day they had been warned by a minister of the Gospel. I had a good deal of matter still remaining, but Mr. Lee's child being to be baptized, and the quarterly collection to be gathered, I stopped there — the place being convenient.

"We sang the three first verses of the 23rd Psalm, and concluded. Mr. Hamilton walked home with me, and we enjoyed much spiritual discourse. I refused to dine with him, and also with Mr. Dinwiddie, and had my chop, which, being eaten with thankfulness, was sweet. Benjamin shared with me, and was sadly afflicted to hear of little Edward's death. I am sure it does not trouble you to speak of our departed joy, else I would desist. I rested the interval, meditating upon the 22nd chapter of Genesis; and having gone forth, not without prayer and thanksgiving, to my second ministry, I have reason to give God thanks for his gracious support. From the chapter I took occasion first to observe, in general, that it was for the instruction of families, as the fount of

nations, in God's holiness; . . . . I observed how it was, that idolatry in the people and true piety in the king, were found together; even as, among the Roman Catholics, you have among the priests singular saints, while the body of the people are rank and gross idolaters. . . . . The lecture was upon Luke xiii. 1; when I sought, first, to give the character of our Lord's ministry in their towns and villages, deriving it from the specimen of Nain, and other fragments from the preceding pages, its munificence of well-doing, its public discourses, sifting and sounding the hearers, its private ministrations in houses and families, improving each to the justification and recommendation of a higher kind of ministry than what presently prevails among us. . . Such, dear, hath been my employment this day, of which I give you this account before I sleep, that you may be edified. . . . . The Lord be gracious unto you, and to our little babe, and to our faithful servant, for He regards me accountable for all my household. Therefore I exhort you all to holiness and love. The Lord reunite us all in peace and blessedness.

"*Monday*, 31*st October*.—I now sit down, my dear Isabella, to give you the humble history of another day, which, from yesterday's exhaustion, hath been a day of weakness. What a restraint and hindrance this flesh and blood is upon the inflamed spirit, and to what degradation that spirit is reduced which doth not beat its weary breast against the narrow cage which confineth it. But to fret and consume away with struggles against the continent flesh, is rather the part of discontented and proud spirits, than of those who are enlightened in the faith of Christ, to whom the encum-

brance which weighs them down is a constant memorial of the resurrection, and by the faith of the resurrection, soothed down into patience and contentment. Besides, the bodily life is to them the period of destinies so infinite, and the means of charities so enlarged, that it is often a matter of doubt and question with them, as with St. Paul, whether it is better to depart and be with Christ, which is far better, or to remain in the flesh, which is more profitable to the Church. And I do trust that my abode this day in an overstrained tabernacle hath not been unprofitable to that Church which is the pillar and ground of the truth. It was a day devoted to private conversations with those who propose, for the first time, to join themselves to the church, at our approaching communion. When I came down to breakfast, my table was spread with the welcome news of Anne P——'s merciful delivery, which Mr. M—— had come to tell me of, but not finding me, had written out. Sottomayor was waiting for me, and joined with us in our morning worship. He is in good cheer, but in want of another hour's teaching, in order to keep his head above water, which, I trust, will be obtained for him by that merciful Providence which has watched over his wife and him. By-the-by, I had taken upon me the task of inquiring, while in the north, what opening Edinburgh presented for his brother, the soldier, which my various unforeseen duties hindered me from fulfilling. Would you give that in trust to some one and let me know? I think Sottomayor, the priest, is truly confirmed in the faith, and I have good reason to think that the soldier is finding relief for the multitude of his doubts. There

came also to breakfast with me, a Mr. M—— and a Mr. C—— (I think), of neither of whom I know anything, except that the former had met me in Glasgow. He has come to this town on adventure, like so many of our countrymen, and came to me in his straits to help him to a situation, leading with him, or being led by, the other lad. I thought it hard enough to be by so slight a thread bound to so secular a work; but looking to the lad, and seeing in him an air of seriousness and good sense, and thinking of his helplessness, I felt it my duty to encourage him; and though I could not depart from my rule of not meddling with secular affairs, and stated so to him plainly, I pencilled him a word to Alex. Hamilton, to give him counsel. At the same time I declared to him what I believe to be the truth, that this coming upon venture from a place we are occupied well, and sustained in daily food from our occupation, merely that we may rise in the world, is not a righteous thing before God, however approved by our ambitious countrymen; and though it may be successful in bringing them to what they seek, a fortune and an establishment in the world, it is generally unsuccessful in increasing them in the riches of the kingdom, in which they become impoverished every day, until they are the hardest, most secular, worldly, and self-seeking creatures which this metropolis contains. Let them come, if they have any kindred or friends to whose help they may come, or if they be in want, for then they come on an errand which the Lord may countenance; but let them come merely for desire of gain, or of getting on, and they come at Mammon's instigation, with whom our God

doth not co-operate at all. . . . . I began the duties of the day at ten o'clock, with Mrs. C——, the woman whom Lady Mackintosh recommended to you for a matron. She has been a mother of tears, having lost, since she came to England, about twenty-five years ago, husband, and child, and mother, and brothers three, and all her kindred but one brother, who still lives in Buchan. The loss of her little daughter, at six years of age, by an accident upon the streets, brought her to the very edge of derangement, in the excess of her grief, so that, like Job, she was glad when the sun went down, and shut out the cheerful light from her eyes. But the Lord restrained this natural sorrow, that it should not work utter death, as its nature is to do, in consideration, I doubt not, of her faith, and for the further sanctification of her soul. . . . She left Scotland without her mother's consent (why, I did not venture to ask), and in six months her mother was no more to give or withhold her consent, which made her miseries in England have something in them, to her mind, of a mother's curse; and this, she told me, was bitterness embittered. Tell this to all your sisters, that they may honour their parents, and never gainsay their mother. Tell it also to Mary, and let Mary tell it to her sisters; but withhold the woman's name; that, like many other things I write, is to yourself alone. . . . . This good woman, whose face is all written over with sorrow and sadness, like Mrs. M——'s, had been a member of Dr. Nicol's church till his death, whose ministry had been to her a great consolation. Tell this to James Nicol when you see him; and say that, now that he is inheriting his father's prayers, he must

walk in his father's footsteps, and comfort the afflicted flock of Christ, which is our anointed calling, as it was that of our great Master. Obey this at the commandment of your husband. This woman satisfied me well, both as to knowledge and spirit, and I admitted her freely thus far. She is now a sort of guardian-servant to a lady in Bloomsbury, who has partial and occasional aberrations of mind. The Lord bless her in such a tender case!

"My next spiritual visitants were the two Misses A——, whom I am wont to meet at Mr. Cassel's, of whom the younger came to my instructions, drawn by spiritual concern, the elder to accompany the younger, and thus both have been led to come forward—I fear the latter still rather as a companion than as a disciple. But, oh, the difference, as a lad who has just parted from me said, 'Grace gives to the youth a fuller majesty, without any petty pride,' so I found it here in the difference between the living spirit of the one's conversation and words, and the shaped formality and measured cadence of the other. I propose looking here a little deeper; but as I have several days devoted to further instruction, I made no demur at present, though I counselled them fervently and prayed with them both. My next was a Miss S——, from Johnstone, near Paisley, who has come to London to be under her brother's medical care,—a fine Scotch head, with an art-pale countenance, and fine Grecian outline of face; she is a regular member of the church in her native place, but out of her own will came to speak with me; and, though feeble in strength, we were able to commune and pray together to our mutual comfort. My last, at one o'clock,

was Mrs. R——, a widow lady of most devout and intelligent appearance, who has been in the habit, for many months, of attending my Wednesday ministrations, bringing a son or a daughter in her hand, with the latter of whom, a sweet girl of about seven, she came attended. And we joined in discourse, and I found in her a most exercised and tender spirit, whose husband of her youth had been cut off from her in the East Indies, and left her three sons and a daughter; the former she had now come up to town to prepare for cadetships; afterwards to return, with her daughter, to the country again, to rear her in the fear of the Lord. And of her eldest son, whom she had watched over with such care for six years, having for that time lived with them in Beverley, for no other end but to educate them herself, in which occupation she met with the healing of God to her own soul in the midst of scoffers and deriders (whereof the memory to mention drew the tears from her eyes)—her eldest son, who had shown no signs of grace under her most careful instruction, being now, like herself, for the sake of the Hindostanee language, placed among the alien as his mother was, has since shown such a new character, and written such letters, as she never expected to receive from him; and then she communed with me of sweet domestic interests, in such a devout and simple way, with so many applications for instruction, and such a tender interest in two half-caste daughters of her husband, whom she has cared for as her own, that I delight to think what a sweet companion she will make for you, my dearest, when you return. Thus passed a forenoon, not without its mark in memory's chart.

"I walked down to Mrs. M——'s, in order to inquire after Anne. . . . . But time forestalls my wishes, dear Isabella. Twelve has struck, and the sweetest, holiest scene of the day remains untold. I prayed for a son, and the Lord this night hath brought me my son, Henry S——, a youth who called on me before my northern visit, and then showed tokens of grace which I had not time to consider; but this night, though but an apprentice, he hath, being the last of my visitants, showed such wonderful seriousness of mind, soberness of reason, purity of life, and richness of character, as far outpasses in promise any youth that I have been the means of bringing unto Christ. And when at nine we assembled to prayer, and Hall showed his pale, emaciated face, and head but sprouting again from the shaver's razor, along with the rest of my household, and I gave him my easy-chair in consideration of his weakness — Oh, Isabella, I felt like a priest and a patriarch! and the Lord enabled us to have one of the sweetest occasions of praising Him and serving Him which for a long time I have enjoyed; so that we parted bedewed with tears, from our prayers, in which we never forget you and our separated family. After which, while I partook of my usual repast, I glanced at that very remarkable article 'Milton,' in the 'Edinburgh Review,' which came in from the library. I take it to be young Macaulay's. It is clever — oh, it is full of genius! — but little grace. Theology of this day — politics of this day — neither sound. Oh, envious Time, why dunnest thou me? Oh, envious Sleep, why callest thou me? I write to my wife, to comfort and edify her, — and bless, her, and my babe, and my

servant, and all my kindred of her father's honourable and pious house. Well, I come. Farewell, my dear wife.

"*November 1st, Tuesday.*—The command of King George could not have made me take a pen in my hand this night, dearest Isabella; and now that I have taken it in hand, I exceedingly question whether this weary head will drive it over another line. But, dear, your thanks with me! I have had such a harvest of six precious souls, whose spiritual communications have carried me almost beyond my power of enduring delight. The Lord doth indeed honour me. But, ah! this will not do; I must leave off. To-morrow, the Lord sparing me, I will set forth the particulars to my Isabella, whom, with my dear daughter, may the Lord this night preserve.

"*2nd, Wednesday.*—It was well-nigh nine o'clock before I was recruited this morning with strength enough to go forth to my labours; for these mental and spiritual labours, being in excess, do as truly require an extra quantity of rest as do bodily and social labours. But I have risen, thank God, well recruited, and have proceeded thus far on the day (five o'clock) very prosperously. The first of my communicants yesterday was a Mary B——, from Hatton Garden, a young woman of a sweet and gracious appearance and discourse, who, with her mother and a numerous family, were early cast upon God's care, who hath cared for them according to His promise. I was much pleased with the simplicity and sincerity of her heart, and the affectionate way in which she spoke of her Lord; so that she left no doubt on my mind of her being, to the extent of her knowledge and talents, a

faithful and true disciple. I shall seek another interview with her; for I do not feel that I have got acquainted with her spirit, or else it is of so simple and catholic a form, as to have no character to distinguish it. The next was my old acquaintance, Sarah Evans, the wild girl, who was somewhat carried in her mind, if you remember, in the beginning of a sermon, and whom I visited at Dr. ——, in Bloomsbury. I little expected to see her so soon, and so completely restored; although she still gives one the idea of one on whom our friend Greaves would work wonders by animal magnetism. I have a moral certainty that this is her temperament, and that her temporary instability was rather a somnambulism of the spirit than any insanity or derangement of mind. Since her seventeenth year she has been a denizen of this great hive of men, friendless and without kindred, and has partook the watchful care of the Great Shepherd. She is a spirit full of inspirations. Her very words are remarkable, and there is a strange abundance and fertility in her sayings which astonishes me. She has already had much influence on her fellow-servants, who have banished cards and idle, worldly books. Poor Sarah! (and yet thou art not poor) I feel a strange feeling towards thee, as if thou wert not wholly dwelling upon the earth, nor wholly present when I 'converse with thee. And sure it is, dear Isabella, she has always to recall herself, as from a distance, before she answers your inquiries; and even the word is but like an echo. Of her spirituality I have no doubt, though still she seems to me like a stranger. Her master at present is Dr. H——, one of my brother's medical teachers here,

who inquires at her occasionally about my brother, and about the Caledonian church; from which I presume that every one recognises in her the same unlikeness to another, and to her station.

"These occupied me till eleven o'clock, after which I went forth to breathe the air into the garden, in expectation of another visitor; and, as usual, for his memory hangs on every twig, the little darling whom I used to fondle and instruct came to my remembrance, and bowed me down with a momentary sorrow, which passed, full of sweetness, into what train of thought I have now forgotten. I occupied myself with my Convocation-book, which is to me what a politician and Christian of the year 1600 would be, if I could have him to converse with me and deliver his opinions. It embodies the ideas of the English Church, in full convocation, upon all points connected with the government of the Church and of the world; and hath done more than any other thing to scatter the rear of radicalism from my mind, and to give me insight into the true principles of obedience to government. There are, my dear, certain great feelings or laws of the soul, under which it grows into full stature; of which obedience to government is one, communion with the Church is another, trust in the providence of God another, and so forth; which form the original demand in the soul, both for religion, and law, and family, and to answer which these were appointed of God, and are preserved by His authority. My notion is, that the ten commandments contain the ten principal of these mother-elements of a thriving soul—these laws of laws, and generating principles of all institutions. These also, I think, ought to be made the

basis of every system of moral and political philosophy. But all this is but looming upon my eye, and durst not be spoken in Scotland, under the penalty of high treason against their laws of logic, and their enslaved spirit of discourse. By-the-by, when I speak of Scotland, it was about this time of day when I received a letter from Dr. Gordon, asking me to preach a sermon in some chapel which Dr. Waugh has procured for the Scots Missionary Society, and bring the claims of that Society before the great people of London. I mean to answer it by referring them to my *Orations on the Missionary Doctrine*, as being my contribution to the Society. . . . But I must go to the church to preach from John xiv. 27. The Lord strengthen me.

"And now, having enjoyed no small portion of His presence for one so unworthy, I return to my sweet occupation of making my dear Isabella the sharer and partner of my very soul. From the garden, where I communed with the canons of the convocation, and with my own meditations on these elemental principles of wisdom, I returned, and upon looking over my paper, I found I had no more visitors till five o'clock; so I addressed myself to my discourse, which I purposed from Gal. ii. 20, in continuation and enlargement of that from Phil. i. 21; but going into the context, I was drawn away to write concerning the church in Antioch, which occasioned the dispute between Paul and Peter, until I found it was too late to return; so that my discourse has changed its shape into a lecture, and where it will end you shall know on Sabbath, if the Lord spare me. At five came a young man, by name Peter Samuel, of a boyish appearance, very modest and

backward, a native of Edinburgh, and by trade a painter in grain; in whom, Isabella, I found such real utterance of the spirit, such an uplifted and enlarged soul, that I could but lie back upon my chair and listen. The Lord bless the youth! It was very marvellous; such grace, such strength of understanding, such meekness, such wisdom! He is also one of the fruits of my ministry; had wandered like a sheep without a shepherd, 'creeping by the earth,' until, in hearing me, he seemed exalted into the third heavens, at times hardly knowing whether he was in the body or out of the body. 'And all the day long, at my work, I am happy, and in communion with the church, which is everywhere diffused around me like the air;' and he arose into the mysteries of the Trinity, and his soul expatiated in a marvellous way. At six I had made double appointments; the one for James Scott, a stately, bashful lad from Earlston, on the Leader, between Lauder and Melrose — the residence, in days of yore, of Thomas the Rhymer — who is come to town to prosecute his studies as an artist. He is already in full communion with the church, but loved the opportunity of conversing with me; and the other was of two who desire to come in company, John R——, a man of about thirty-five, and C——, a young lad of about twenty. Moreover, Samuel had not departed; and I think they had been congregated of the Lord on very purpose to encourage my heart and strengthen my hands, for it is not to be told what a heavenly hour they spent in making known the doings of the Lord to their souls; and the two latter told me that every Sabbath they held meetings, before and after church, with others

of the church. Poor Samuel had been lamenting his loneliness, but now his soul was filled with company who welcomed him to their heart; and Scott had now one whose spirit and manners attracted him; and I was lost in wonder how the Lord should work such things by my unworthiness. But remembering my ministerial calling, I opened to them the duty of self-denial in the expression of our spiritual experiences before the world, lest they should profane these sanctuaries of our God; and the necessity of wisdom to veil with parable and similitude, before the weak eye of man, the brightness of the pure and simple truth, reserving for the Lord and for his saints the unveiled revelations of our higher delights. Upon which life, having enlarged to their great seeming contentment, we joined our prayers together, and they departed. Now these men who thus commune together are of most diverse ranks. C—— is a gentleman's son; R——, though of high expectations, has been reduced to fill some inferior office in Clement's Inn; and the others, whom I know, are Scotch lads, working as journeymen; so true is it that there is no difference in Christ Jesus. After seven I went to the meeting of the Sabbath-school teachers. . . . After I returned home, I wrote a letter to Constantinople to L——, who sends us the figs, exhorting him to stand fast among the alien; which altogether was a day of such exhaustion as unfitted me for writing to you the particulars of it, that you might rejoice in my joy, and give praise unto the Lord, when you know the blessing which He is pouring out upon my ministry. Oh, that He would give me food for these sheep, and a rich pasture, and a shepherd's watchfulness, and the love

of the Chief Shepherd, that I might even die for them if need were! In all which spiritual conditions I am much encouraged by what yesterday the Lord brought before me.

"And now, dearest, this day hath been a day of thought which has hardly yet taken form to be distinctly represented; but on Sabbath I will communicate the result. Only I have had much insight given me into the Epistle to the Galatians, from which the matter of my discourse will be taken. At six I went forth to my duties, and opened to my children the nature of the Christian Church, as being to the world what the new man is to the old; what the body, after the resurrection, is to the present body. . . . After which, commending them to the grace of God, I returned to the vestry, and came forth again to discourse to the people of Christ's bequest of peace. . . . But though my head could thus rudely block out the matter, I wanted strength and skill to delineate it as it deserved; which, if I be in strength, I shall do it another time. . . . After the lecture, ten more came desirous to converse with me; so that I shall have, by the blessing of God, a very rich harvest this season. . . . The Lord be with thy spirit.

"*Thursday, Nov. 3rd.*—Last night, my dearest Isabella, upon my bed I had one of those temptations of Satan, with which I perceive, by your affectionate letter, that you are oft troubled, and which I shall therefore recount to you. The occasion of it was the memory of our beloved boy, who hath now got home out of Satan's dominion. That morning he was taken by the Lord I was sleeping in the back room, when

dear sister Anne, who loved him as dearly as we all did, came in about three or four o'clock in the morning, and said, 'Get up, for Edward is much worse.' The sound of these words, caught in my sleeping ear, shot a cold shiver through my frame like the hand of death, and I arose. Of this I had not thought again till, last night on my bed, before sleeping, Satan seemed to bring to my ear these words; and, as he brought them, the cold shiver trickled to my very extremities. I thought to wile it away, but it was vain; and I remembered that the only method of dealing with him is by faith, and of overcoming him by the word of God. So I took his suggestion in good part, and meditated all the sufferings of the darling, which are too fresh upon my mind; and sought to ascend, by that help, to the sympathy of our Lord's sufferings, and to take refuge (as the old divines say) in the clefts of His wounds till this evil should be overpast. Whereupon there came sweet exercises of faith, which occupied me till I fell asleep, and awoke this morning in the fear of the Lord. I make Mondays and Thursdays my days of receiving friends; and while we were engaged with worship, Mr. Ker came in, and, after prayers, Mr. C——. I was happy to understand from the former that Mr. Cunningham, of Harrow, has become a violent opponent of the expediency principle in respect to the Apocrypha*, and think the committee will come to the righteous conclusion, which will please our good father much.

* Referring to the hot and bitter conflict then going on in the Bible Society, chiefly between the parent Society in England and its Scotch auxiliaries, which were vehemently opposed to the insertion of the Apocrypha along with the canonical Scriptures.

Mr. C—— came on purpose to communicate the dying injunction of a friend who had been converted from Unitarianism by my discourse on that heresy last summer, and had died full of faith and joy before fulfilling his purpose of joining my church. I trust he hath joined our Church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. As we went to the city together, Mr. Ker bore the same testimony to the blessing of my discourses to his soul. . . . For which I desire you to give thanks unto the Lord when you pray secretly, or with Mary; for it is a great blessing to our household to be so honoured. I found our friend David at length able to see me again, who has passed through a terrible storm of afflictions, swimming for his life, and tried with great agony of the body; but in his soul above measure strengthened and endowed with patience, and full of holy purposes and continued acknowledgment to the Lord. . . . His wife, and Martha, her sister, bore testimony to the goodness of the Lord, and we joined our souls in thanksgiving with one accord.

"Thence I went on my way to our friends, the G——'s, who now live in America Square, towards the Tower. I know not how it is, but I feel a certain infirmity and backwardness to speak to Alex. G—— concerning spiritual things, though I love him, and believe that he loves the truth; against which, by the grace of God, I was enabled in some measure to prevail, and make some manifestation of the truth, and unite in prayer, which had the effect of bringing him to signify his purpose of waiting upon me (I suppose concerning the communion). The Lord receive this

worthy and honourable youth into the number of his chosen! Thence returning, I felt an inclination to pay a visit to Miss F——, in Philpot Lane; but resolved again to proceed on more urgent errands, and passed the head of the lane, and was drawn back, I know not by what inducement, and proceeded against my purpose. It was the good will of the Lord that I should comfort one of His saints, and He suffered me not to pass. I found the mother of that family, who has long walked with God, and travailed in birth for the regeneration of all her children, laid down by a confusion in her head, which threatened apoplexy or palsy; and now for three days afflicted, without that clear manifestation of the Holy Comforter which might have been expected in one so exercised with faith and holiness. Many of the friends and kindred were assembled in the large room below, and the father and the children; to whom having ministered the word of warning and exhortation, and prayed with one accord for the state of the sick, I went up to her bedchamber with the father and daughters, and found the aged mother lying upon the bed more composed than I had expected. I taught her that Christ was the same, though her faculties were bedimmed; that her soul should the more long to escape from behind the dark eclipse of the clouds; but not to disbelieve in His mercy, because her body burdened her, and caused her to groan. We bowed down and prayed, and the Lord gave me a large utterance; and when I had ceased, I could not refrain myself from continuing to kneel, and hold the hand of the dear saint, and comfort her, and utter many ejaculatory prayers for her soul's consolation; and I was moved

even to tears for the love of her soul. With which having parted, her daughters, who remained behind, came down and told us that she was much comforted, and had proposed to compose herself to rest. The Lord rest her soul, and prepare it for His kingdom! though I hope she may be restored again to health. . . .

"Thence I proceeded to Bedford Square, by Cheapside, and gave Mr. Hamilton charge of your letter, which may you receive safe, and with a blessing, for it is intended for your comfort and edification in the faith; that you may know the goodness of the Lord to your head, and rejoice and give thanks. On my way to Bedford Square, I called at Mr. Macaulay's, having heard that he and his wife were poorly; and with a view, if opportunity offered, of saying a word to their son concerning Milton's true character, if so be that he is the author of that critique. For I held with him once, but now am assured that Milton, in his character, was the archangel of Radicalism, of which I reckon Henry Brougham to be the arch-fiend. But I found they had gone to Hannah More's for retirement and discourse. The Lord bless their communion! I called at Mr. Procter's to look at two marvellous heads by Correggio—the one of the Virgin about to be crowned with stars; the other of St. John: certainly, beyond comparison, the most powerful heads I have ever seen. The latter, they say, is a portrait of me. But I do not think so. I cannot both be like the Baptist and the beloved Apostle; I would I were in spirit, for the flesh profiteth nothing. Anne P—— and the child continue to do well, and the poet is already a very tender father. . . . . The Counsellor and I had a good deal of

private discourse. . . . . He is a tender father, and a well-meaning man, but wilful; and wilfulness, dear Isabella, is weakness and inutility; *the excess of will being to the same effect as the defect of will.* Yet I love him, and he loves me, and permits me to open truth in a certain guise to his ear. The Lord give me wisdom, if it were only for this family! I returned home to peruse Eckhard's 'Rome,' and to worship with my family and read the Holy Scriptures, and conclude by writing the summary of the day to my dear wife. And now I return to my chamber, thankful unto Thee, oh my Father, who hast protected thine unworthy child, and not allowed him this day to stray far from thy commandments. Thou hast made me to know Thee; Thou has exercised my soul with love and kindness; Thou hast called me out of the world by prayer. I bless Thee, oh my God; I exceedingly bless Thee! And now, my tender wife, go on to seek the Lord; wait upon Him; entreat Him; importune Him. Do not let Him go till He give thee thy heart's desire. And thou, Margaret, my sister, submit thy strong spirit unto the Lord, and thou shalt find peace. And Elizabeth, my sister, persevere in the good part which thou hast chosen, and thou wilt find all that is promised to be true and faithful. And, my lovely Anne, be composed in thy spirit by God, who will deliver thee from all things that disconcert and trouble, and make thy spirit lovely. And, my David, remember our covenants of love with one another, wherein thou wert oft moved to desire God. Oh, forget Him not, my children! Walk before Him, and be ye perfect. . . . . May He keep us as the apple of the eye, and hide us under the

shadow of His wings this night; and when we awake in the morning, may we be satisfied with His likeness!

"*Tuesday, Nov. 4th.*—I feel it necesssary already to be on my guard against the adversary, lest he should convert these journals, intended for the comfort of my dear wife, into an occasion of self-display or self-delusion; and the more because I have been singularly blessed by the goodness of the Lord, which, you would say, was the best protection against him; but the Lord judged otherwise when, after enriching Paul with such revelations, he saw it wise to give him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure. Therefore let me watch my pen, and the Lord watch my soul, that nothing pass thence to the eye of my partner which may in any wise convey a false impression of my heart. I have resumed my custom of reading the lessons of the day, besides the Psalms, whatever else I may read out of the Holy Scriptures, and was struck, in reading out of Ecclesiasticus, with the odour of earthliness which there is about the wisdom of it. It is rather shrewd than divine; and, I am convinced, has little heavenward drift in it to the soul. But how much more spiritual than the maxims of Rochefoucault, or any other modern who has sought to express himself by aphorisms! I was in great danger of falling under the spirit of indolence after breakfast, and loitering. The sensation about my eyes, which foretells a listless day, made its appearance; and I felt inclined to stretch my limbs, and take up a book at hand, and while away the time. But I thank God who enabled me to withstand the enemy, and to stir myself up to study, which I prose-

cuted with a view to my morning sermon. This is beginning to take shape, and will form, I judge, a digest of the Epistle to the Galatians, or a statement of the Apostle's argument for the abolition of the law and the liberty of faith, in order to my afterwards showing our deliverance from the forms of the world into the liberty of Christ.

"This was a fast-day to me, at least a soup-day, which I judged good for my health, so that I felt languid the whole forenoon until four, when Miss A—— called to conduct me to her house. The two Miss A——'s joined our church at the last communion. Their mother had died some months before, and they are orphans. They win their bread by the needle, and dwell with two younger brothers, whom they wished me much to converse with. Those two brothers have no one over them, and are as wild as the beasts of the wood. Though only fifteen and seventeen, I was perfectly amazed at the irreverent, thoughtless way in which they behaved when I entered — nothing awed, nothing moved, but full of conceit and self-possession. The eldest is a clerk in a writer's (*Anglicè*, attorney's) office; the younger is a sort of clerk to a councillor,— one to keep the door of his office open, and to go errands — for whom his master is glad to find something to do. Oh! what a horrid effect London has upon the character of children! It is only beginning to be revealed to me in its native deformity. The awful iniquity of a great city is nothing to its silent effects in deteriorating the races of men. They really dwindle as if they were plants. I saw at once that if I was to be profitable to these two lads, it was by authority as well as by affection; so I

resolved to teach them the reverence of God, and of God's word, and of God's messenger. The eldest sat over against me on the other side of the fire, the two sisters working at the table, and the youngest beyond the table, and he would not be persuaded to come near me. I opened my way by speaking of their orphan state, and their want of counsel and authority over them. Then I passed to the authority of God, and opened the tendency of youth to be headstrong and untamed. The eldest, I perceived, was full of observation and thought. He could not divide the matter between the authority and affection with which I spoke. By degrees I got him to open his mind, which was very wilful. I continued to oppose to his whims the will of God, and would not lower the discourse to any compromise, or indulgence to any of his moods. His brother had to go away earlier; and after getting him to sit beside me, I spoke to him with great earnestness and affection, and blessed him; but whether he was moved from his indolent and lethargic obstinacy, I know not. Then with the eldest I dealt for another hour, in various discourse, which I am now too weary to recall. And when I knew not what impression I had made upon his short and hasty temper, which I saw writhing between the awe of the truths which I spoke, and the irritation of the mastery which I held over him, the lad rose from his seat, and went to a press and took out a parcel, from which he drew forth a set of beautiful little prints of Bible subjects, and asked if I had seen them. I answered, no. Then, said he, 'Will you accept them from me?' I hesitated; but perceiving it was altogether necessary, if I would have any

further dealing with this strange spirit, I took them; and here they are before me. Upon which, his hour of seven having come, he went his way. . . . . I am weary, but very well; and give the Lord thanks for his goodness, praying Him to strengthen me with rest. St. Pancras is ringing up the hill twelve o'clock. So the Lord compass you and my beloved child. Farewell!

"*Saturday, Nov.* 5.—I had all arranged to finish this sheet and send it off to-night; but James P—— is come, and has occupied me so much, and the Sabbath is now on the verge of coming in, and I have much before me, therefore I delay this day's summary till to-morrow evening, if God spare me. But that I might not go to bed without blessing you and our tender lamb, I have taken up my pen to write—That the Lord God, whom I serve would be the guardian of my wife and child until He restore them to the sight of his servant. Amen.

"*Sabbath, Nov.* 6.—And now, my dearest Isabella, I am alone with thee again, and can give thee the news which are dearest to thy heart, that the Lord hath not deserted His unworthy servant this day, but hath been, especially in the evening, present to my soul, and given me a large door of utterance, I trust to the edification of His church, and the comforting of His people. Yesterday I had laboured all the morning with a constant and steady diligence, and about one o'clock was in full sight of land, with strength of hand still left me to have finished this letter, and so cheated the lazy post, when, as I said, James P—— stept in; in whom, to be brief, I find we shall have a most easily accommodated inmate, if so he likes to become, and a very shrewd,

logical companion,* full of political economy and of mathematics, who cannot help stating every thing as if it were a question to be resolved by the Calculus, and cannot conceive of any ideas or knowledge which are to be otherwise come at than by the methods of the intellect; which error I have laboured hard to correct in him, and not, I believe, without some partial success, He is one of the coolest, shrewdest intellects I have ever met with,—sweetly disposed, very gentle, and easily served. . . . . My morning lesson this day was the 2nd chapter of the Hebrews, in which is taught us this great lesson, that we shall partake with Christ in the government of the world to come, which I take to be the same with the 'rest that remaineth,' mentioned in the 4th chapter, or the perfection of the present dispensation of the Gospel in the millennial state. . . . . Also there is taught us, though but incidentally, the end of His incarnation to destroy death and him that hath the power of death, and deliver us from the fear and bondage of death. Let us enter into faith, my dear wife, and be delivered from the blow which death hath brought us. . . . . Also He took our flesh that we might be assured of our oneness; that we might be able to give ourselves to the hope of His glory, He did first join himself to the reality of our humility. My discourse was a view of the doctrine of the Epistle to the Galatians, introductory to discourses upon Gal. ii. 19, 20. . . . . This introduction, sum of doctrine, and threefold argument embraced the whole Epistle, which I had thus digested into my discourse, with application of each branch of the argument to the present times and all times; but

I was able to deliver only about a half of it, and withal our service reached to within a quarter of two. My evening chapter was the 21st of Genesis, when I felt my mouth opened in a remarkable way to bear testimony to the want of faith in this generation, who would embrace the heavens and the earth, and the truth and majesty of God, within the nutshell of their own intellect, and believe in God not a hair's-breadth beyond their intellectual sight,—which, adopted by children as scholars, would destroy the school — by subjects, would destroy government; and, in short, that these sacred things all hang together, and must sink or swim with faith. . . . . I was much strengthened in this discourse, and in both my prayers. . . . . Mr. E—— was there morning and evening. The Lord add that youth to His Church! I travail for him. Farewell, dear Isabella. You cannot have so much pleasure in reading these as I have in writing them. The blessing of the Lord be with my babe—my tender babe. The blessing of the Lord be with her mother—her tempted but victorious mother. . . . .

"*Monday, 7th November.*—Though wearied, my dearest Isabella, with a day of much activity, and afterwards with the exposition of that blessed Psalm, this night's lesson, and now with much discourse and discussion to James P——, whom I like exceedingly, and William Hamilton, all concerning the subordination of the sensual or visible, and the intellectual or knowable, to the spiritual or redeemable, (the first giving the typography, the second giving the method, and the last the substance of all true and excellent discourse) I do now sit down with true spiritual delight to commune

with my soul's sweet mate. Yea, hath not the Lord made us for one another, and by his providence united us to one another, against many fiery trials and terrible delusions of Satan? And, as you yourself observed, has he not over again wedded us, far more closely than in any joy, by our late tribulation, and the burial of our lovely Edward, our holy first-born, who gave up the ghost in order to make his father and mother one, and expiate the discords and divisions of their souls? Dear spirit, thou dearest spirit which doth tenant heaven, this is the mystery of thy burial on the wedding-day* of thy parents, to make them for ever one. Oh, and thou shalt be sanctified, God blessing, by such a concord and harmony of soul as hath not often blessed the earth since Eden was forfeited by sin. My wife, this is not poetry, this is not imagination which I write; it is truth, rely upon it, it is truth that lovely Edward hath been the sweet offering of peace between us for ever; and so, when we meet in heaven, he shall be as the priest who joined us,—the child of months being one hundred years old. Let my dear wife be comforted by these thoughts of her true love. I found much sweet meditation upon my bed last night; and when I awoke in the morning He was with me, and I had much countenance of the Lord in my secret devotions; and when I descended found Mr. T——, the preacher, and Mr. Bull met in the breakfast parlour, and Mr. P—— seated in the library. That preacher is very clever, and infinitively prolific in his vein, and that no contemptible one; but volatile and wild as the winds, yet musical in

* This much-lamented child was buried on the 14th October, the second anniversary of their marriage.

his mirth, and full of heartiness and good will. But he serveth joyaunce of the mind, and has not yoked himself to any workmanship; and I have accordingly exhorted him to be about his Master's work—to get him down into the battle, and take his post. Mr. Bull brought me a very sweet frontispiece, which he has executed for Montgomery's *Psalmist*, one of Collins's series. . . . . As usual, his bashful, meek company was very sweet to me.

"When they went, Miss N—— came, who can believe none, and would intellectualise everything; and consequently looks for her religious prosperity in expedients of the intellectual or visible world, or in *means*, as they call them; (but, Isabella, nothing is a means of grace in which Christ is not seen to be present, whence he is called the Mediator or mean-creator) which, I told her, I could no longer indulge her in, by framing my discourse to her subtleties, but would read her the word of God, to which, if she framed her mind by faith, then it would be well; but if not, she must utterly perish. After which reading of the 103rd Psalm, being moved in my spirit with love to her, I pronounced over her, without rising, a prayer which made her weep abundantly—tears, I trust, which may by God's grace reap joy hereafter. She says I have demolished all the glory of her building, and she stands as upon a ruin of herself. I say unto you, Miss N——, Christ can alone build up and mould your shattered mind to the similitude of His own mind. You see, my dear, what boldness the Lord is endowing me with. . . . . What clean, black villany, what unwrinkled villany, there was upon those countenances I met

in Saffron Hill and Field Lane, on my way to the Bible Society, where, among others, I saw the face of Father Simon, looking with all its eager unrest; and there being nothing of importance to detain me, I came away with the old worthy, and held such discourse with him as the Strand heareth not oft, until we reached the Temple, whither he entered to his business, and I returned to the city to dine with Mr. Dinwiddie and Wm. Hamilton; and on my way, having found a receiving-house, I committed your letter to the care of the post. But, ah! forgot the blessing or prayer for its safe arrival, so doth the rust of custom corrode the frame of our piety. Life should be a web of piety; custom makes it a web of impiety. My dear, we must be redeemed in all things from wickedness to serve the living God. Having dined with my friends, I proceeded at three to visit Mr. David, who had yesterday a relapse, and is this day very low. The surgeon apprehended no danger; but I know not how it is, I fear we are going to lose him. His soul is winged with faith: let it take its flight. He also is my son in the Gospel. I could not see him, but we lifted up our hearts together for his health and salvation. Then I proceeded to Mrs. T——; and now, my dear, learn a lesson of spiritual life, and let me learn what I am now to teach thee. This sweet mother, whom I greatly love, said to me, 'All darkness, all darkness; what if it should have been all self-deception?' That is, the Lord was shaking His saint out of the last refuge of Satan, which he takes in the righteousness which hath been wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. As Knox said on his death-bed, 'The enemy has been trying me with

representations of the work which has been done by me.' . . . .

"From thence I proceeded to the Session, where we proceeded with good harmony and union, till they came to speak of time; and then I told them they must talk no more to me concerning the ministry of the word, for I would submit to no authority in that matter but the authority of the church, from which also I would take liberty to appeal if it gainsaid my conscience. I am resolved that two hours and a half I will have the privilege of. Write me your judgment in this matter. . . . . We had another meeting, at seven, of the congregation. . . . . So I returned, and one o'clock sounding in my ear from Pancras church, I bid you farewell for the night, and pray the Lord to bless you, and our little treasure, and her who hath joined herself to our house, and hath a right to the share of its blessings. Farewell, my spouse!

"*Wednesday, 9th November.*—I sit down, my dearest, after a day of languishing and mourning, rather more cheerful and refreshed than I have deserved to be; for, whether from defective sleep or over-fatigue yesterday, I have been very dead and lifeless all day long, until the evening roused me to some spiritual exercises. Satan could not have had this occasion against me, but for my own most blameworthy conduct in preferring man before God in the services of the morning. For, having promised to take James P—— down to Bedford Square to breakfast, I hurried over both my private and family worship. Now this is such infinite irreverence done unto the majesty of heaven, that I know not how any stronger proof of want of faith could be found.

. . . When we returned from Mr. M——'s, I endeavoured to seek the Lord in my closet, but found Him not. He hid His countenance, and my heart was left to the bitterness of being alone. I took to the reading of the 3rd chapter of Hebrews, in the original, with a view to pasture for my people; and afterwards to the 22nd of Genesis, with the same end in view, of which I have been able to make out eight verses. I wish to read the Sabbath lessons, at least, in the Hebrew, and to make both lessons a diligent study through the week, with Pool's 'Synopsis' before me; and I have besought the Lord, as I do now again beseech Him, that I may continue in this righteous and dutiful custom. In the Hebrew, it would perhaps be an entertainment to your heart to accompany me, that we may not be divided in this study when we meet again. But I forget that you have the dear babe to watch over; for whom, my dear, let our souls be exercised rather than for the dead. Oh, let us wrestle with God for her soul, that she may not be caught away from us at unawares. I wish she were here, that I might in my arms present her to the Lord every morning and evening. Your letter gave me great delight, and came to cheer me in my spiritual mourning. The Lord continue to support your soul, and to be your portion! Oh, how blessed has been thy death, my beloved, to thy parents' souls! thou first-fruits of our union, and peace-offering of our family, dearly-beloved child, who never frowned on any one, and never fretted, but moaned the approach of that enemy which was to bereave us of thee! . . . .

"I sought to begin the discourse on Galatians ii. 19, whose object it will be to show that an outward law

is always a sign of bondage, and that the inward willingness is liberty, which a Divine indwelling spirit can alone beget and maintain within us. Pray that I may be enabled to handle this mighty theme to the glory of God, and the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom. For it calls upon all that is within me, and I shall have this and the following week to give to it. . . . . Too many cares of philanthropy, dear, are as seductive as any other cares; it is divinity which alone can sustain philanthropy. But a divine is become like a phœnix. We know one, but he is near in ashes, and who is to arise in his stead, I know not. . . . After leaving the study, Mr. P—— and I walked together. . . . . At six, I had the visit of another child of my ministry, Miss Miller, in whom I found a very humble and sweet spirit, thoroughly, as I trust, convinced of sin, and purged of her sin. After conversing and praying with her, I went out to Mr. and Mrs. Hall, at their own request, to open the subject of the communion to their souls, when I set it forth by the parable of the prodigal son. That at baptism we had obtained our freedom in our Father's house, who ever since had divided to us our portion of gifts, graces, and opportunities, which we had prodigally squandered; but, taking pity on us, He doth keep open table in His house, in order to welcome every one who hath a longing to return. He breaketh bread and poureth out wine, the body and blood of His Son's sacrifice, for every one who will come, as the prodigal came, heartily repenting, and humbly confessing his sin. This, therefore, is what I desire — the sense of sin, and the faith that it is to be forgiven only through the blood of Christ. For the

enlightening of the mind, for the convincing of the heart, and the converting of the whole soul, it is the work of the Holy Spirit, who is the gift of Christ to His weak but faithful disciples. Oh, dearest, how profitable is that mystery of the Trinity to my soul! The husband and wife heard me with tears. I trust these are tokens for good. The Lord enable them to retain upon their souls those feelings towards Him which they this night expressed to me. By these exercises my spirit was restored. The Lord hath restored my soul, and I was able to comfort the family with the 42nd Psalm, and I trust to encourage my own spirit. . . . . Now, the blessing of the Lord rest upon my wife, and child, and servant this night, who have not separated, I know, without commending me to the Lord! Thus do we unite our interests on high, and lay in our proofs and pledges of mutual love with our heavenly Father. . . . . Farewell!

"*Thursday*, 10*th November*, 1825.—I pray the Lord so to quicken my love to my dear wife, and so to move my soul with the spirit of truth and wisdom, as that I shall much comfort and edify her by the words which I am about to write. Yesterday I so wore myself out with the various duties I had to discharge, that I was hardly able to do the offices of family worship, and, in utter inability, forewent my sweet interview of faith with my Isabella; no, not of faith, but of these visible emblems of faith, for the interview of the spirit I truly had with you. . . . . I have fulfilled your commission to Mrs. Hall, who received your gift with much thankfulness. Our maid is now gone, and we are a very happy and, I trust, contented household. In the church

last night I opened the real contents of the new covenant (Hebrews viii. 10, to the end) to the young communicants, who are about to enter by the proper form to the renewal of it. For you will observe, dearest, that there was a renewal of the covenant when the children of Israel entered into the land of promise, as there is to us: first, the granting it at baptism to the faith of our parents; and again, the renewal of it over the sacrifice of our own faith. Now these contracts are, 1st, the law within, and no longer without, that is, liberty of soul to obey God, instead of restraint of fear; 2nd, the ruling of God over us, and our subjection to Him in all willingness; 3rd, the teaching of His Spirit in all His revelations; 4th, the absolution of all our sinfulness through Christ's atonement. The first being the conversion of our will; the second, the maintenance of our weakness; the third, the enlightening of our knowledge; the fourth, the purging of our conscience from all fear. What an inheritance, my dear wife, is this to which you, and I, and all believers are admitted! Let us enter it, let us enter into it. Why can we not enter into the willingness, the confirmation, the enlightening, the peace of it? We cannot enter in by reason of unbelief. Now encourage one another, I pray you, for the time is short.

"This morning we mustered a goodly company, though it was the stormiest morning almost I remember; three missionaries from the Mission House, our broad-faced Würtemberg friend, so dear to us all, and a countryman, and an East Indian, half-caste, preparing for his return to preach to the Hindoos. They tell me there are at present two of their countrymen at St. Petersburgh fulfilling to the letter our Lord's instructions to his dis-

ciples. I have a very strong purpose of sending over to all the Mission Houses copies of my *Orations* for the sake of the youth; and to this effect of ordering Hamilton to send me all that are not sold, and desiring him to transmit the proceeds of the sale which there has been to the widow of Smith. Tell me what you think of this. The German missionaries at Karass soon found out the unproductiveness of Scottish prudence when applied to propagate the Gospel, and are fast recurring to the primitive method on the confines of Persia, where they at present labour. They speak of a great revival in the Prussian kingdom; more than a hundred young preachers have gone forth from the universities to preach the Gospel. The Lord prosper his work! To-morrow a number of young missionaries are to receive their instructions at a public meeting in Freemason's Hall, and they are to set out for Malta some time this month. The Lord is their helper. I took occasion, from the 51st Psalm, to speak to them of the qualifications there referred to. . . . After their departure, I addressed myself to my sweet studies of reading the lessons of the day, and meditating the lessons of Sabbath in the original tongues. . . . Afterwards I betook myself to my lecture on Christ's attendants and sustenance in his ministry, Luke viii. 2, 3, which is a subject of great importance and fruitfulness, if the Lord see it good to open it to me by His Spirit, which I do now earnestly pray. James and I, after dinner (we have now got the wine-cellar open, and I have ordered Hall a bottle of Madeira to strengthen him), went down to Bedford Square, where I had a good deal of profitable conversation with our dear

friends. But before I went out I received a parcel, . . in which was a fine lace cap and wrought robe for our dear departed boy; . . . . our darling hath now a more precious robe than can be wrought by the daughters of a duke; yet it is a sweet and honourable token of their love. I have written to tell them whither the object of their love is gone. . . . . Our little boy! thou art incorporated with my memory dearly, with my hope thou art incorporated still more dearly. We will come, when our Lord doth call, to thee and to the general assembly of the first-born. Oh, Isabella, I exhort thee to be diligent in thy prayers for thee and me!

"*Friday, 11th November.*—I have just dismissed Mrs. Hall, my dear Isabella, to set into the study to-morrow morning a slice of bread and glass of water, purposing to keep myself alone for meditation, and I pray the Lord that he would give us both a heart full of divine thoughts and holy purposes. . . . . Mr. Hamilton is a great comfort to me; I may say of him, as Paul says of Mark, that he is helpful to me for the ministry, literally delivering me of all secular cares. But I must proceed in order. When we were at our morning worship, Mr. O—— slipped in, with his slow and canny foot, in order to seek introductions to Scotland, which I would not give; for though I am enough satisfied with him for the rule of charity, I have no sufficient evidence upon which to commend him to another. Indeed I would be suspicious of his favour-seeking and power-hunting, if I were not satisfied it is universal, and that he may have caught it by infection, not generated it in his own constitution; but, ah, it is a weakening disease, however

caught! When I had dismissed, I read the 3rd chapter of John in the original, and studied the latter half of the 3rd chapter of the Hebrews with a diligent reference to the parallel scriptures; and in studying that chapter it will help you to know that 'even as Moses in all his house' is not to be understood *Moses'* but *God's* house, the house of 'Him who appointed him,' as you will see by referring to the passage in Numbers, of which it is the quotation; the whole argument being to set Moses forth, not as having a house of his own, but as a servant in the house which Christ had ordered, and to which, in due time, He came as the heir to claim and inherit His own. That idea of the Church, under the similitude of a house, is constant in the New Testament, derived, I take it, from the temple, which was a type of the Church; and I have no doubt that 'In my Father's house are many mansions,' means the Church in which he prepared a place for his apostles, by sending to them His Holy Spirit; so that thenceforth they became its foundation stones. 'We are made partakers with Christ if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end,' refers to Christ's coming in the end to occupy His house, when all His people shall share with Him in His kingdom; which He himself sets forth by the same similitude of a householder who went into a far country, and in the meantime gave his servants their several charges. We are these servants; let us be found faithful, and when He comes we shall be made partakers or sharers with Him. After these studies in divinity, I relieved my mind by reading a portion of the Convocation book which treated of our Lord's respect to those who sat in Moses' seat, present-

ing this feature of His obedience in very meek and true colours. Oh, how I have offended herein, making myself a judge instead of a minister of the Church! and yet I know not how otherwise to proceed when all things are manifestly so out of square. I do pray earnestly that the Lord would keep me manly in the regulation of the censorious part of my spirit. For I have this day, and immediately after the perusal of the above, written a lecture upon the simple and unprovided faith in which our Lord made His rounds of the ministry; arguing thence the spirit in which His ministers should stand affected towards the provisions of this life, and should receive them; wherein I have not scrupled to declare the whole counsel of God; but I know not whether in the right spirit.

This also has occupied me since dinner up to the time of evening prayer, when the Lord opened my mouth to speak of His love to our souls, so that I could see the tears gather in the eyes of my little company. I do hope there is a work of Divine grace proceeding in these servants' hearts. . . . . Oh, Isabella, I have a strong persuasion of the power of a holy walk and conversation, in which, if we continue, we shall save not only our own souls but the souls of those that hear us; even now there is a strong conviction of that truth brought home to my spirit. For yourself, dear, when you are in darkness and distress, then do not fret, but clothe your spirit in sackcloth, and sit down and take counsel with your soul before the Lord, and study all its deformity, and search into the hidden recesses of its unbelief. It is a rich lesson for humility; it is a season of sowing seed in tears. The Lord permitteth such

temptations that we may the more thoroughly see our depravity; and in the midst of our seasons of brightness they come like clouds threatening a deluge, which the rainbow covenant averts from the soul of God's chosen ones. . . . . My dearest, we must soon go to our rest, and our sweet infant also; and perhaps the Lord may not see us worthy to leave any seed on the earth. His will be done. I pray only to be conformed to His will. Now rest in peace, my other part, and thou, sweet link of being betwixt us! The Lord make our souls one! And may He bless with the inheritance of our domestic blessings, spiritual and temporal, our faithful servant, who has joined herself to our house. Fare you all well. The Lord compose your souls to sweet and quiet sleep.

"*Saturday*, 12*th November*.— . . . I am left to my sweet occupation of making my dear Isabella a sharer of the actions of my life and the secrets of my heart; would that they were more valuable for thy sake, my dearest love! This day was devoted to pious offices connected with the memory of our dear boy, that it might be made profitable to the living. But I found not the satisfaction which I expected. I began by reading the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians in the original, hoping to be somewhat raised in my thoughts; but whether I fell away into the criticism and *scholiæ*, from the old Greek fathers, which are in my noble Greek Testament, I know not; but I think I missed the edification of the spirit; Satan is never absent from us; he can slay as effectually from the letter of God's word, as from the lightest and vainest pleasures of the world. After which I studied the funeral service of the Church, in which office I found some movements of the spirit

which I sought. Then I girt myself to my duties, and wrote; first, a letter to my father's house, exhorting them against formality, and testifying to them the nature of a spiritual conversation; then I wrote to M——, manifesting, according to my ability, the evils of self-communion and self-will, and the blessings of communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. I know not how it may be felt by her, but if she should speak of it, assure her it was done faithfully and in love. . . . Thereafter I addressed myself to some reading in my Convocation book and Roman history. . . . . Since tea, I have been busy preparing my discourses, and I do pray that He would bless them. I had much liberty in exhorting my little evening congregation and opening to them the comfortable doctrine of the Divine Providence, and in praying for our souls, and the souls of all men; and now, dearest, twelve o'clock hath rung in my ears, and having exhorted the household to timeous hours on the Sabbath morning, I must not be slack to give the example; and that I may leave room for to-morrow's work, which I trust will be holy and blessed, I part from you with few words, praying the Lord to have you all in His holy keeping. But let me not forget that this day, which I have improved to others, I ought of all to improve the most carefully to Edward's mother. Every twelfth day of the month, my loving and beloved wife, let it be your first thought that your babe is mortal, and that the father of your babe is mortal, and that you yourself are mortal! and every twelfth day of the month, my loving and beloved wife, let it be your last thought that your babe is mortal, and that the father of your babe is mortal, and that you yourself

are mortal. Do this that you may swallow up our mortality in the glorious faith of our immortality in the heavens. Farewell, my wife. Dwell for ever with the Lord, my sister saint in Christ; dwell for ever with the Lord, my tender babe, and be blessed of Him, as He was wont to bless such as thee. I pray the Lord to bless all with whom you dwell, thou daughter of Abraham and heir of the promise!

"*Sabbath, 13th November.*—My dear Isabella, I have finished the labours of another Sabbath, with much of the presence of the Lord in the former part of the day, and not so much in the evening. There must have been some want of faith either in the writing or delivery of my discourse, and I have besought the Lord that he would preserve me during this week in a spiritual frame of mind, and move within my soul right thoughts and feelings for the salvation of my people; and I desire that you would ever on a Sabbath morning pray the Lord to preserve my soul in a spirit of faith and love all the day, and in the evening pray that He would direct my mind to such subjects of meditation and methods of handling them as He will bless. . . . . I have been much exercised this last week with the possibility of some trial coming to me from the resolute stand which I have taken, and will maintain, upon the subject of the liberty of my ministry. For the spirit of authority and rule in the church begins to grow upon me, and I fear much there is not enough of the spirit of obedience in our city churches to bear it. But I am resolved, according as I am taught the duty of a minister of the Gospel, to discharge it, and consider everything that may befall as the will of the Lord.

I was telling this to Mr. Dinwiddie this morning, for I find, good men, they have all their little schemes, after which they would like to see me play my part, instead of looking to me, as one under Christ's authority, to watch over the church, and to be honoured of the church. The church was crowded both morning and evening; but I am prepared, if the Lord should see it meet to try me here also, and I sometimes think I shall be tried here at some time or other. Now, my notion is, that the Lord is very gracious to me at present, permitting me to be strengthened; that then Satan will have power against me for a season by every form of trial—and, alas! there are too many open rivets in my armour;—but that in the end the Lord, if I abide faithful, will increase me with much honour. . . . . I thank God that I am very strong; and even now (ten o'clock) sleep begins to loose the curtains of my conception, and twilight is settling in my mind. . . . . And now, dearest, I commend you and our little one unto the Lord, and pray that the Lord may bless you and preserve you for a blessing to these eyes.

"*Monday*, 14*th November*.—My dear wife, this has been a day sweetly varied with the good mercies of God, who in various ways hath used His servant to minister unto the comfort of His people, which I shall now set forth to you in order, being full of gladness and thankfulness. In the morning we had the Psalm of our Lord's humiliations (lxix.), and the chapter of Job's most pathetic lamentation and divine confidence in his Redeemer (xix.), upon which I have been able to reflect more during the day by what I have seen, than I was able to reflect unto my family, though I sought

for words of exhortation. We were, besides our own, Mr. J——, a friend introduced by Pears; Rev. Mr. Cox, of the Church of England, a calm, pious, and charitable man, whom I met at Brighton; and Sotto-mayor, the soldier. I had to withstand the radicalism and village-town conceit of the first, who cut all questions with a keen blade of self-conceit, but neither of wit nor understanding, in which I was greatly assisted by the wisdom of Mr. Cox, who, having travelled, was able to speak with authority; and he delighted me with one declaration, that in the Catholic churches of Italy he had never heard a sermon (though he had heard many) which breathed of saints' days and other mummeries, but always of solid theology, deep piety, and much unction, and that he had met with many whom he believed most spiritual. My dear, I have often more concern about the issue of the intellectual forms of our own Church, which tend to practical and theoretical infidelity, than of the sensual forms of the Romish Church, which do tend to superstition, and still preserve a faith, though it be of the sense. Anyway, I give God praise that either with us or with them He preserveth a seed. When they departed, poor Sarah Evans came to me, troubled in her conscience, poor girl, that she had not confessed to me all her sins; and she was about to open all her history in time past, when I interrupted her, and would not allow her to proceed. Poor thing! I pity much her wandering mind, still timorous and startled like one that had been lost, and not sure of having found the way. I think I must consult the elders about her. It is a hard case; she is truly spiritual, but has a certain instability and flutter

in her judgment. . . . After her came a poor woman, the sister of Mr. M'W—— (formerly of Dumfriesshire), who has been a prodigal for the last twenty-one years in a far distant land of the West Indies, having followed into dissipation a dissipated husband, buried ten children, left one, and now returned *in formâ pauperis*, —left upon the shore by the good Samaritan, who provided her in a fortnight's lodging, expecting that in that time her brother, to whom he wrote, would be eager to relieve her. But her brother seems more ashamed of her than sorry for her, and dreads her return to Scotland, and had written a letter, entreating me to get her into an hospital, which I found on my arrival. I liked its spirit ill, even before I had seen her, and wrote that I would not recommend to any hospital the sister of a Scotch clergyman in good circumstances, except she should be wholly abandoned. Still he writes me, inclining to the finding an asylum for her in London, and wishing me to see her, which this day I appointed by letter, for she lives all the way at Shadwell, and is disabled of her side by a palsy. And she came,—a poor picture of the prodigal, humbled and penitent, and longing for her brother's bosom as ever the prodigal did for his father's. 'I should never be off my knees, I think, if I could but see John, and partake of his prayers and counsels; the Lord would bring peace to my soul.' And she wept; and she very sorely wept when I read her parts of her brother's letter, but confessed to her past sinfulness; and before she went away her last words were, with many tears, 'And tell him I am an altered woman.' . . . . So I sat down and wrote for the widow, and rebuked

my brother sharply, and told him he ought to make for her a room around his fireside. What may be the issue I know not; but my part, God helping me, is to help the prodigal widow. . . . .

"Then I went forth to visit Mrs. P——, as I set down in my letter; but be thankful that letter went not to the dead office, for giving a glance to the object of my affections, whose name I thought fairly inscribed, I found that it was fairly blank, and had to get pen and ink at the receiving-house. James P—— (who is very great in the highest mathematics, and reads La Place's Calculus of Generating Functions, which that greatest of calculators has applied to probabilities), immediately told me that La Place observed, to show how constant causes are, that the number of such undirected letters put into the Paris post-office was year by year, as nearly as possible, the same. When I went up to Mr. P——'s shop I found his sister standing in it, and she took me up to her mother's sick-room, saying little or nothing by the way. And her mother took me by the hand, and said, 'The Lord hath sent you this day, for my Andrew is cast into prison.' . . . . Andrew, you must know, is betrothed to a young lady whom he has been the instrument of converting to the Lord, and when he left S——'s, being unresolved what to do with his little capital, which could not meet his present business, his betrothed's uncle said, 'Get your bills discounted, and you shall not want for money;' for they had always said that he was to have £500 on the wedding day, and £500 afterwards. To this the servant of the Lord trusting, sunk his money in his lease, trusting to have

his floating bills met by his friend, who, growing cool because Andrew did not instantly succeed, withdraws his promises, and leaves our friend in deep waters; and deals with his niece to send poor Andrew all his letters, and to request hers in return. This took place on Friday, and this day, at breakfast, two of the officers of justice, at the instance of a creditor, came, and he went with them. Thus was his mother left, and thus I found her all but overcome. I comforted her as I could, and prayed with her as I could, and saw that something was to be done as well as said. So coming down, I sat down to write in the back shop, while his sister sought some clue to the creditor's address, that I might find the prison. . . . . So I proceeded by Cary Street, and, after diligent search, found Andrew in a house of which the door is kept always locked, seated with three men who seemed doleful enough — one resting his forehead on his hands, another reclining on a sofa, and the third contemplating, half miserably, half sottishly, a pint of porter. Andrew was close by the chimney corner. We communed together, and he was as calm and cheerful as Joseph, having Joseph's trust; and of a truth, yesterday, he seemed to his own household lifted above himself. And he had tasted my evening discourse upon the minister's wayfaring, raven-brood life to be very good. And it is marvellous, we concluded our service with the 34—37 verses of the 37th Psalm,—as if the Lord would encourage me with respect to that service of which I desponded to you last night. While I talked with dear Andrew, not knowing but the others were the watchful officers of justice, he upon the sofa struck his forehead and

started to his feet with a maniac air, crying, 'Oh, God, the horrors are coming upon me!' and wildly, very wildly, strode through the room; so that I was standing to my arms, lest he might be moved of Satan against me for the words which I was speaking to Andrew. And he with his hand upon his head wept, and the other man would comfort with 'patience'—'philosophy.' But the wounded man continued to burst out, and stride on, and beat his forehead. Whence we gathered that he had been there for a whole month, daily expecting releasement, but none came, every message worse than another; and ever and anon he spoke of his wife. Then, when his fit was over, in which he talked of people putting an end to themselves, and of the fits of horror which broke his sleep, I addressed words of comfort to him, and prevailed to soothe him; so that, when I came away, he said, 'It were well for us to receive many such visits, Sir.' But I must break off—the night wears very late, and I am getting too much moved. The Lord bless, for the night, my loving and beloved wife, and the Lord bless our baptized babe—our little daughter of the Lord!

"*Tuesday*, 15*th*.—Andrew, who realised to me the idea of Joseph in prison, had come away in great haste, and omitted to take his Bible with him, which I supplied with my far-travelled and dear companion, now bound firmly as at the first. Those storms which I encountered upon the Yarrow mountains melted the cover of my writing-desk, and firmly bound the loose back of my Bible. Leaving Andrew, I proceeded to my engagement at six o'clock in Fleet Market, which was to visit Miss M——, and her brother and sister, who live

with her. Their father dead, their mother in Essex, and two married brothers in town, so estranged from her by selfishness and worldliness, that 'if five shillings would save me from death, I hardly think I could muster it amongst all my relations.' Oh, what a blessing to Scotland are her family ties! Families here are only associations under one roof for a few years, to issue in alienation and estrangement: I am grieved at my heart to witness it. But she abides strong in the Lord. . . . . Her brother gave wonderful ear to me. My words entered deep, for he wept almost continually, and was much overpowered; and I do trust in the Lord that the lad may be brought to a more obedient and loving spirit towards his sister. Having finished a very sweet visitation, to which there came in an old woman, and a boy about to proceed to North America, whom I also exhorted, I hastened to Mrs. P——'s, in order to set her mind, and especially her imagination, at rest, which would be conjuring a thousand ideal frights about a prison. Which having done with much consolation to my own spirit, I called as I passed at Bedford Square to see if anything had happened untoward, but found that all was well. . . . . Mr. Scoresby was still sitting, and after I had taken a cup of tea, we came on our ways together, enjoying much delightful discourse. The Lord is opening his mind wonderfully to the right apprehension of the ministerial office. I arrived not at home till about ten o'clock, and assembled the family for worship; and after writing the above, I went to bed and dreamt a dream of sweet thoughts — that I was sitting at Jesus's feet and learning the way to discharge my office,

having only six days to hear from the Divine Instructor, at which time He was to remove from the earth.

"I was much refreshed by the sweet thoughts of the night, and arose very cheerful; and while the family was at worship, Mr. Scoresby and Mr. Hamilton came in, whom I had invited on purpose to meet one another. Our morning was passed in sweet discourse, and afterwards I opened to Mr. Scoresby, in my own study, many of my views concerning the Church: into some he could enter, and into others not. But he is growing richly in divine knowledge, and I praise the Lord for his sake. We prayed together before he went away, and I invited him when he came back to make his home with us. . . . . Then I addressed myself to my discourse on the bondage of law, and having wrought that vein till I was wearied, I betook myself to the correcting of another proof, and had gone over it once, and was about concluding the second reading, when a letter from Wm. Hamilton announced that Mr. David was much worse, and a few hours might terminate his life. Thereupon I left all, and proceeded to the house of death. On my way I met Mr. Simon proceeding to Bath in order to build up certain churches there who have besought his presence. We commended each other to the Lord, and took our several ways. I found Mr. David still living, and some faint hopes of amendment; but I am prepared for *the worst*, which I doubt not is *the best*. . . . . I wrote a letter to Willie, who is at Norwich at school, opening the afflicting intelligence to him as best I could. . . . . I returned in time to get my proof-sheet finished for the post; since which I have been labouring up the hill

with my lecture upon the pious women who ministered unto Christ; when, at nine o'clock, a lady came in to enjoy the privilege of our prayers. At the church on Wednesday evening a sorrowful lady asked me if it was true that I read prayers at my own house and permitted people to come. I said, at family worship I delight to comfort and encourage the hearts of all who are present, and if you come on a spiritual errand you shall be welcome. So this night she came, and hath opened to me her sorrows. Three months ago she lost her only boy, after three years' illness, during which she watched him continually; and now she is alone in the world, with a memory haunted and a heart stunned and broken, knowing little of the spiritual, and dwelling much in the imagination. His sufferings had been extreme, and his death frightful; and his poor mother, not more than your years, is now alone in this great city, which to her is a great desert. . . . . Her husband was a Sicilian, and died before the boy was born. . . . . She wanted to know if she would know her son in heaven. I could have wept for her, but I saw she needed another treatment, and therefore rebuked, but with kindness, her imaginations, and showed her the way to the spiritual world, whither I pray the Lord to lead her. . . . . The Lord enable me to direct her in the way of peace. . . . . Thus another day has passed with its various incidents and various blessings. I have been oft in it enjoying near communion with God, and oft I have been cold and lifeless. When shall I be wholly with the Lord? I do desire His abiding presence — the light of His countenance. . . . . Now may the Lord be the canopy over

your head, and over the head of the babe, this night, and over mine, enveloping us in the everlasting arms!

"*Wednesday, 16th November.*—Our dear, dear friend is no more. He departed about five o'clock, in exactly that frame of spirit which, above all others, I would wish to die myself in. . . . . In the five weeks of his sore affliction his robust and zealous spirit has had the meekness of a little child, and as a little child he was taught of the Spirit in a wonderful way. . . . . The propitiation of Christ and his own unworthiness were his chief meditations, and continued so to the last. During that time a worldly care has not crossed his lips. His soul has been full of love to all, and of great, great affection to me. I know not that I have one left who loved me as he did. . . . . He accompanied me to the ship, with Mr. Hamilton, when I came to see you and little Edward; now he is gone in London, and Edward lies in his cold grave in Scotland; and I am left, and you are left, whom I feared lest I should lose; and left we are, dearest, to bear fruit unto God, and fruit we will bear unto God, being cleansed by the word of Christ, and supported by the juices and nourishment of the vine, and dressed by the hands of our heavenly Father. Let us watch and exhort one another, as I now do you, my dearest wife, to much frequent private communion with God. This was what our friend had resolved to apply himself to with more diligence than ever if it had been the will of the Father to spare him. About three o'clock, I received a message from Wm. Hamilton that he was fast fading away, and had expressed a wish to see me. I had proposed going about two hours after; these two hours would have lost me

the sweetest parting in my life—my child first born unto Christ, at least who is known to me. I found him far gone in breathlessness, but lively in hearing, quick in understanding, and full of the Spirit of life. He stretched out his hand to me; his other was stretched to his wife, on the other side of the bed. . . . . I prayed with him, and afterward continued, at intervals, to supply his thoughts with pregnant scriptures. I repeated to him the 23rd Psalm, in which he was wont to have such delight. This revived him very much, and he uttered several things with a grave, full, deep voice, interrupted by his want of breath. 'My whole hope, trust, and dependence is in the mercy of God, who sent His Son to save the meanest.' . . . . . I saw death close at hand, and drew near and took his hand. His breathing deepened, and became more like distinct gasps. And it failed, and failed, until his lungs did their office no more, and he died without a struggle of a limb, or the discomposure of a muscle—his mouth open as it had drawn its last breath—his eye fixed still on me; and we stood silent, silent around him. Then Mr. Bedome closed his eyelids. I know not why they do so. I loved to look on Edward's. Dear, lovely corpse of Edward, what a sweet tabernacle was that over which thy mother and I wept so sadly! My much beloved child, my much-cherished, much-beloved child, dwell in the mercies of my God, and the God of thy mother! We will follow thee betimes, God strengthening us for the journey. I had still an hour to sit with Mrs. David, and to write sweet William and his grandfather. She was comforted, and I left her tranquil. Mr. Hamilton, who is much affected, was seated below, in the dining-room, and we came to

the Church together, when I discoursed from the 24th and 25th verses of the 14th chapter of John, and made known to them the good intelligence that our brother had had a good voyage so far as we could follow him, or hear tidings from him. Every one seemed deeply affected, and all whom I talked with were sensibly rejoiced. . . . . Thus another of my flock has gone to the Chief Shepherd. . . . . Andrew P—— brought me up my Bible, having been delivered last night, and giving thanks unto God. I love him much; his mother, also, is better. So that the Lord hath shined from behind the cloud. . . . . James P—— is a very sweet companion. Hall is still weakly. The rest are well. I fight a hard fight, but let me never forsake private communion or I perish. The Lord bless you and our dear babe. I wish I were refreshed with a sight of you both.

"*Thursday, two o'clock.*—I have had such a conversation with one of my congregation, a medical man, upon the subject of what I would call 'the theology of medicine,' as made me sorry you were not present to hear it. But in good time, when you are restored to me, you shall hear him often; for he is both a gentleman, a man of science — the true science of nature—and a Christian. He discoursed upon infants, and the treatment of infants, so well and wisely, that I could not let this letter go without noting to you one or two things.*. . .

"*Thursday, 17th Nov.*—My dear Isabella, nothing is

* Here follows a minute record of the advice he had just received, reported with the most grave and anxious particularity, but concluding thus: "To these rules give no more confidence than seems to your own mind good, and put your trust in the providence and blessing of Almighty God."

of such importance as to have a distinct view of the end of all our labours under the sun — our studies, our conversations, our cares, our desires, and whatever else constitutes our being. For though many of these seem to come by hazard, without any end in view, believe me, my dear, that every habit arose out of an end, either of our own good or some other good desirable in our eyes; and that the several acts contained under that label go to strengthen that end which it carried with it from the beginning. Now, dearest, our one, only end should be the glory of God, and our one, only way of attaining that end by the fulfilment of His will; and the only means of knowing that will is by the faith of His word; and the only strength for possessing it is the love, desire, and joy which are begotten in us by the Holy Ghost. Therefore be careful, my dear sister in Christ, to occupy your thoughts and cares with some form of the divine revelation, and to have before the eye of your faith some divine end present or distant,— yea, both present and distant; and then shall you have communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ from morning to evening. This attempt, this succeed in, not by the force of natural will, which will make such a hirpling, hobbling gait of it, but by the practical redemption of your Saviour, which will by degrees clear you of the former slough, and feather your callow nakedness, and give you wings with which to mount up into the exalted region of life. Have ever in view the glory of God, and ever seek help to it by prayer, and the Lord himself will lead you into the way. These thoughts occurred to me as I came home from Bedford Square, where I took dinner with our dear

friends, and I resolved I would write them for your sake. I spent the morning in study upon the help which women may afford and have afforded in the Church, and have brought my lecture nearly to a close; so that I have to-morrow and next day for the great theme of legal bondage on which I have entered. I would, and earnestly pray that I might, keep my thoughts during study intent upon the glory of God and the promotion of Christ's kingdom. And it were not dutiful if I did not acknowledge that the Lord is bringing me into a region of nearer communion. But I cannot tell what huskiness there is about my heart, and in my discourse what seeking after intellectual or imaginary forms. Oh, that I could feel the very truth, and rejoice with the free joy of its inheritance! During my study, Dr. Wilkins came in, and discoursed to me for about an hour with a simplicity and beauty which ravished me. If he do not prove visionary upon further acquaintance — if his practical understanding be perfectly sound, then he is the greatest accession to my acquaintance since I became acquainted with Mr. Frere, and will prove to me, in all that respects the chemistry of the bodily constitution, what other leaders have been to me in respect to the mental and the spiritual. The Lord hath showed me such marvellous kindness, in respect of teachers, that I cannot enough praise Him. . . . The object of his discourse was to prove that nature had no tendency to any disease, but wholly the reverse; and that, were it not our ignorance and perversity, we would come to our full age, and drop into the grave as a shock of corn in its season; and he began his demonstration from the condition of the

child. . . . There was much more he had to discourse of, but I told him I had enough for the present, and would hear him another time. He is a man of fine manners and a sweet nature,—of continued acknowledgment of God and blame of man. . . . . Now, dearest, I have put all this down for your sake, that you might meditate upon it, and make the use of it which you judge best. The man you will like exceedingly, that I know full well, because we are of one spirit now, or fast growing into one spirit—praised be the mercy of our God. . . . . The Lord be gracious to you and all the house. I pray for you and baby, I oft think, with more earnestness than for myself, which is sentiment, and not faith. The Lord edify us in one most holy faith; and Mary also, whose salvation I earnestly desire. Amen.

"*Friday*, 18*th*.—My dear Isabella, there is no point of wisdom, human or divine, so carefully to be attended to, for one's own good, or for the knowledge and good of others, as the spirit which men are of. For the spirit draws after it the understanding, and determines the views which men take of every subject, in the world of sight or in the world of faith. Some people remain under the spirit of their minds, and become intensely selfish. But the social principle leads the several spirits to congregate together for mutual defence and encouragement. First of all there is the Holy Spirit, whose communion constitutes the true Church of Christ, and you may be sure their opinions will be orthodox doctrine, charitable sentiment, sweet, patient temper, and, in short, transcripts of Christ Jesus our Lord. Then there is the worldly spirit, which is one in respect

of its opposition to the former, and intolerance of all its opinions; but in respect to itself, is divided into many, its name being Legion. Of these I find to prevail at present the following:—1st. Around you in Scotland there is the spirit of the *human understanding*, of which scepticism of all things that cannot be expressed with logical precision is the characteristic, and an utter abhorrence of all mystery; whereas, as you know, to the Holy Spirit of simplicity everything is a mystery unfolding itself more and more. There is also the spirit of self-sufficiency, which characterizes our countrymen above measure. With us we have the spirit of expediency, which calculates what it can foresee, and accounts all beyond to be void and unreclaimed chaos; it is utterly fruitless of any principle self-directing in the human soul, and would make man wholly under the influence of outward things. Of this class Owen is the fool. About the universities of England is the spirit of antiquity, which prizes what is recondite and difficult of discovery, and runs out into Egyptian expeditions to the pyramids and the tombs. And amongst the common people there is, in direct opposition to this, the spirit of radicalism, which hath no reverence for antiquity, or indeed for anything but its own projections. In the Church here there is the spirit of formality, which often ascends into very high regions of beauty and comeliness, but wants the living, acting, confirming principle —is but an Apollo Belvedere or a Venus de' Medici after all,—not a living, acting, self-directing principle. I have not time nor strength to open the subject philosophically, but I have said enough to lead your meditations to it, which is all that I desire. For observe

you, my dear, that if you be of the right spirit, all things will right themselves in the eyesight of your mind. Hence the *Holy* Spirit is called also the spirit of *truth*. We do not get right by conning our opinions back over again, but we change our opinions, as we do our dress, from a change in our spirit. Therefore these are often not hypocrites, but rash men, who are seen so suddenly to change their sides. And true conversion draws with it an alteration of all our opinions; and conversion is properly defined as a change of spirit. How often do people say, It was all true he said, but spoken in a bad spirit. Now if you wish to be right, seek communion with the Holy Spirit; and if you wish to know whom you ought to listen to, by what manner of spirit he is of, try the spirits whether they be of God. Milton could not say, Jesus is the Son of God, because he would not yield to the Holy Spirit, but preferred the spirit of radicalism; and as no one can know the Father but he to whom the Son revealeth Him, so no one knoweth the Son but he to whom the Spirit revealeth Him. And what is meant by having right opinions, or being wise, but to know the Son who is truth? And much more remains, which I may perhaps write hereafter.

"I gave God thanks for your letter, and for the answer of my prayers that you continued to stand fast in the Lord. With respect to your journey, you will easily reach Dumfries by posting it; and I think you ought to take the road by Biggar, Thornhill, and the Nith, as being the more pleasant, and I think, if anything, the more sheltered of the two; although, in that respect, both are bleak enough; . . .

from Annan you had better take the way by Newcastle, and thence to Mr. Bell's, of Boswell, which I understand to be within seven miles of York, and I would meet you there. . . . From Annan you will bring me two or three pairs of a shoe of a passing good form for my foot. Nothing has occurred to me to-day worth mentioning. I have enjoyed the presence of God beyond my deservings. I preached to Mr. N——'s people, and recognise in them improvement, as I hope; *much* in him. There was one idea which occurred to me worth writing. How vain is it for man to trust in God's mercy, when His own Son, though He cried hard for it, could find none, but had to drink the cup of justice! I am weary. The Lord be with you all!

"*Saturday, 19th November.*—I am so fatigued, dear Isabella, that I dare not venture to write; but will not retire to rest without inserting upon this record of my dearest thoughts, a husband's and a father's blessing upon his dear wife and child.

"*Sabbath, 20th November.*—I have reason this night again to bless the Lord for His goodness to His unworthy servant, for I have been much supported, and have had great liberty given me to wrestle with the souls of the people; but I want much the grace of wrestling with the Lord for their sake. I feel daily drawn, like the prophet Daniel, to some great and continued act of humiliation and earnest supplication for the Church, but Satan hindereth me. And yet I doubt not the Lord will work in me this victory, and that by your help I shall yet be able to wait upon the Lord night and day, and to weep between the altar and tabernacle for the souls of the people. Indeed, I have

already planned that when the Lord restore you to my sight (in spirit we are never parted), we shall pass an hour of every day, from four till five, in our own room, with no presence but the presence of God, which we will earnestly entreat: and we will rest from our great labours that hour, and meditate of our everlasting rest. Before entering upon this day's labours, I will look back upon yesterday, that you may be informed of one or two things which will be pleasant to your ear. The death of our friend David hath wrought wonderfully for good with us all, so that men busy with the world have wept like children; and all have, I think, had the spiritual seasoning intermingled with the natural feeling. It wrought upon me in the way of greater earnestness of spiritual communion; and I think yesterday morning, in the visions of the night, I was conscious of the sweetest enjoyments of the soul I ever knew. There was no vision presented to my sight in my dream, but there was a sense of deeper meaning and clearer understanding given to our Lord's parting discourse, which filled me with a spiritual delight; a light of spiritual glory that was unspeakably mild and delightful. I awoke full of thanksgiving and praise, and bowed myself upon my bed, and gave thanks, and arose to my labours. I break off for worship. The Lord be in the midst of us!

"In reading the last half of the 16th chapter of John, I was struck with the 23rd and 24th verses, which show us why the Lord's prayer was not concluded in Christ's name—because he was not Intercessor and High Priest till after His death. He was perfected, that is, consecrated (for the word for consecration was

then perfecting), by sufferings. In the days of His flesh He had no mediatorial power, but was conquering it to Himself and His Church; and therefore He called upon them to rejoice that He was to go away. Now to return. All the day long I continued in study, with walks in the garden and relaxations of history, until after two o'clock, when I bore Mr. P—— company to Bedford Square. . . . . Thence I proceeded to the house of affliction. . . . . Now I come to the labours, the blessed labours, of the Sabbath. This morning I awoke at six, but was too weary to rise till eight; and having gone over my sermon, with my pen in my hand, to bring it to very truth as nearly as I know it, I went to church with Mr. Dinwiddie, who enters cordially with me into prayer, and is desirous of a more spiritual discourse than when you used to walk with him. After Psalms and prayer, in which I had no small communion, we perused the 4th of Hebrews. . . . . Then I commenced my discourse on Gal. ii. 14, upon the bondage of law, opening the whole subject of justification by faith, upon which I intend to discourse at large; and I presented them first with a view of the dignity of the law, both outward in the state and inward in the soul. . . . . (But it has struck twelve; the Lord bless thee and the child, and rest us this night in the arms of His love and mercy, so as we may arise as to a resurrection of life against to-morrow! Amen.) To-morrow is come, and I am still in the land of the living to praise and glorify my Creator and Redeemer; which having done according to my weakness, I sit down to my pleasant labour, after many incidents which must form part of my next despatch.

Then showing them the Charybdis of licentiousness upon the other side of the fair way, into which Antinomians and other loose declaimers against the law did carry miserable souls, and where also superstition and Methodism did bind them in bare bondage after they had seduced them from the wholesome restraints of law, into which law they ought to have breathed the spirit of true obedience — I concluded by entreating their prayers that I might be enabled to handle this vast subject with power, and love, and a sound mind (which I again beseech of you also). . . . . .

"In the evening I was feeble in prayer to begin with, no doubt from want of faith; but the Lord strengthened me towards the close, otherwise I think I should not have had heart to go on with the service, I felt so spirit-stricken. . . . . My lecture was upon the ministry of women in their proper sphere in the church, which I drew out of the Scriptures by authority; and by the same authority limited and restrained from authority, either in word or in discipline, to the gentle and tender ministry of love, and devotion of goods and personal services, which afforded me a sweet and gracious topic to descant upon, in defence of female liberty, and emancipation from worldly and fashionable prudential laws and tyrannies of decorum, false delicacy, and other base bondages; all which I set off with the historical illustrations of woman's vast services, martyrdoms, shelter of the persecuted, care of the poor, to the seeming conviction of the people; and concluded with a summary of a Christian woman's duties in her various relations; and insisted upon them, as they were members of my

church, to be helpful to me, or else I saw no prospect of any growth of communion in the midst of us. . . . . Dearest, I have set forth many things in this letter for your meditation. They are seeds of thought (rather) than thoughts; the *spirit* of truth (rather) than the *doctrines* of truth. Think on these things, and meditate them much, and the Lord give you understanding in all things. For our babe we can do nothing but pray unto the Lord, and *cease from anxiety, living in faith;* and *cease from anxiety, living in faith.* . . . . .

"*Monday*, 21*st November*, 1825.—May the Lord of His great mercy fill my soul with the fulness of love to my dear wife; that, as Christ loved the Church, I may love her, and in like manner manifest with all gracious words my unity of soul with her soul; that we may be one as Thou, our Creator, didst intend man and woman to be from the beginning. This day, dearest, hath been to me a day of much and varied activity, which, being full of reflection and conflict, I shall recount in order. After good rest, which, by the blessing of God, my wearied head doth constantly enjoy, I arose about eight, and, being outwardly and inwardly apparelled, I came down to fulfil the will of God, whatever it might be, and found Mr. M——, the artist, and Mr. S——, also an artist, of whom I wrote to you, as being one of my communicants, with whom and the family, having worshipped the God of our salvation, while breakfast was arranging in the other room by good Mrs. Hall, Miss W—— and another lady came to wait upon me, whom I went to see. The lady is a Mrs. S——, dwelling in the city, who has been much blessed by my ministry, and was brought to it in

this wonderful way, as she told it me from her own lips. She had been much tried by a worthless husband, of whom you know there are so many in this tie-dissolving city; and in the midst of her sorrowful nights she dreamed a dream: that she was carried to a church, of which the form and court, even to two trees which grew over the wall, were impressed upon her mind; and there she heard a minister, whose form and dress, to the very shape of his gown, was also impressed upon her, who preached to her from these words: 'Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.' This she communicated to one of her comforting friends, to whom, describing the gown, she answered that he must be a Scotch minister who was intended by the vision, for they are the only people who wear that kind of gown. She had already heard Dr. Manuel and Dr. Waugh, but was sure they answered not to the figure of the vision; but, as she passed a window, she saw a print of me, and was impressed with the resemblance. Heretofore she had been deterred from coming near me by the crowd, but now she resolved some evening to come; and, having taken a friend's house by the way, they strongly gainsayed her purpose, and would have taken her elsewhere with them, and all but prevailed. This detained her beyond the hour, and, when she returned, our psalm and prayer were over, and I was naming the subject of lecture, and the first words that fell upon her ears were the words of her dream: 'Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.' She stood in the midst of a crowd hardly able to stand, and beheld and heard all which had been revealed to her in the visions of the

night. . . . Is not this very marvellous, dear Isabella, and very gracious, that the Lord should comfort His people by such a worm as I am? I exhorted her to abide steadfast, and to come again and see me.

"When breakfast was over, I brought Mr. S—— with me into the library, whose heart, I perceived, was full of some matter, who told me, with an artlessness and alarm which showed his happy ignorance of our town infidelity, that a cousin of his had, in the course of religious conversation, declared his disbelief of Jesus being the son of David, and disputed the genealogies, and had maintained that in Joshua's time they were but poor geographers, otherwise they would never have alleged that the sun stood still. I was at pains to instruct him, and to teach him the subtle arts of the tempter, but he concluded by saying that it was not for himself, but for his cousin, that he was concerned, and the big tear filled his eye when he said it. I entreated him to bring his cousin some night at our hour of prayer, and I would do my endeavour to set him right. Now I had received, this very morning, a letter from one Gavin H——, a poor infidel, craving that I would preach a discourse upon the character of God, which he could not understand to be both merciful and vindictive; and I had received two other letters, one with a pamphlet, craving help of me against the infidel Taylor, who is poisoning the City at such a rate; and having likewise been entreated by two men to attend a meeting in John Street Chapel upon the subject of the District Society for Evangelizing the Poor, I resolved to attend, though somewhat against my intention, considering that these things, put together, were a sort of call of Providence. Having

dismissed Mr. S——, I had communion with Mr. M——, whom Mr. A—— had been in much fear about lately, lest he should be falling back, through the love of a young woman, and the companionship of her family, who were not spiritual. To this subject, introducing myself gently, modestly, and tenderly, I came and spoke upon it with feeling, as having been in like manner tried;—for in what way have I not been tempted, and, alas! overcome in all? . . . .

"Then, being left alone, I sought to relieve my mind by perusing the history of those wonderful instruments of God, the Roman people, not without prayer that the Lord would interpret the record of His providence to my soul. And I think that I was edified in it, until I had gathered strength to finish your letter, which Brightwell interrupted me in, to whom I revealed all my convictions of the spirits that were abroad in the world, and which were defacing the glory of the Church: the radical spirit among the Dissenters, the intellectual spirit in the Scottish Churches, the spirit of expediency among the Evangelicals. He could not see along with me throughout, but he saw more than most men I converse with. Do pray that the Lord may enable me clearly to discern truth, and steadfastly to bear testimony to it! It is a Jesuitical spirit that is opposing Christ among the Methodists. And these four spirits are so weakening the being of the Church, and corrupting the life which is faith, that, though their numbers may increase, it will still be true, 'When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?' . . . .

"I had engaged to dine with Mr. H—— at four o'clock. . . . I knew not that anything was waiting me

there. But where is not the minister of the Lord wanted, in this distressed, imprisoned, and rebellious earth? The old man was ill, and they had been forced to bleed him. I went in to see him on his bed, and would have prayed with him, but he professed he was not able to hear me. Ah, Isabella, I fear for that old man: I greatly fear his soul is asleep and will not awake. Make your prayer for him, for he also shall be required at your husband's hand. There are two Miss F——'s, cousins of the family, come to spend the winter, who talked much like the young women of Edinburgh, chattering a vain palaver about ministers, and music, and organs, with which I would have nothing to do. But, after tea, I began to talk to them all, concerning the things of their peace, and was led by Mrs. H——'s questions to unfold the judicial blindness to which men are at length shut up, and to open the whole matter of our dependence upon the Father, which was mightily confirmed by the first half of the 17th chapter of John, which is a marvellous acknowledgment of the Father's sovereignty. I pray you to read it and learn humility, self-emptying humility, and profound nothingness in your prayers. They all wept, the religious belles as well as the rest; and a young nephew, half-caste, about to sail for India, wept with a very full heart, after I had prayed with them all. I trust that family is growing in grace, and I fear they have long abidden formalists. Remember this one thing, my Isabella, that we who have believed are by covenant to be brought into the full inheritance, but according to the Lord's time and proportion; but surely as He hath sworn, we shall inherit, therefore abide waiting, abide waiting (how long did

He wait for us?), waiting in perfect faith of being led in.

"I took the John Street Church by the way, and heard them deliberating about an expedient to meet Taylor's blasphemous tract, that is soon to be published. They are very busy, these enemies of the Lord. He cannot bear it long. They are carrying the people like a stream away from God. But I told them it was not by the expedient of tract-writing or circulating, or controversial work, but by manifestation of the truth to the conscience, that they were to prevail; and that, when they found the people upon that ground they should answer them with a caveat, that the matter at issue was not there, still giving them a reason with meekness and fear; but shift the ground as fast as possible, not because the ground was not tenable, but because the kingdom was to be contended for elsewhere. That the teachers ought to assemble to make themselves masters of the infidel's fence, in order to interpose their shield against his poisoned arrows, but with the other hand they should feed the poor captive, and nourish him into strength to fight himself. They heard and believed me. But I came away entreating the Lord to make me a man in the breach against these sons of Belial, and that I was willing to die if He would spare His inheritance from these fiery flying serpents of infidel notions, which have fallen in upon this central congregation of Israel. Tell your father to be on his post, and to tell his brethren to look to their arms, they know not how insecure their citadel is. Henry Drummond was in the chair; he is in all chairs — I fear for him. His words are more witty than spiritual;

his manner is *spirituel*, not grave. . . . . Then I came home, and immediately there gathered a pleasant congregation . . . . to whom, with my family, I addressed the word of exhortation, and opened the 103rd Psalm, that psalm of psalms, and our passage in order was Luke xiv. verse 25. How appropriate to these communicants, but oh, Isabella, how sublime! None but God durst have uttered such an abrupt apostrophe to a multitude of men; and no multitude of men would have borne it but from a manifest God. But how contemptible a comparison of unresolved professors—savourless salt, neither good for the field of the Church nor for the dunghill of the world! I pray you to consider this passage—it was more fertile to my soul than I have now strength to tell. The ladies went their ways, and left the two young men, with whom having conversed in the study I found to be of a righteous spirit, and pressing into the kingdom. . . . . These things rejoice me. The Lord enriches me with comfort. Blessed be His name! Blessed be His holy name! His thrice holy name be blessed for ever and ever!

"And now, dear, I am wearied, having fulfilled many gracious offices, and having had a breathing of the Spirit on them all, and on this not less than the others, my worthy wife. That thou and ours, and the house where thou dwellest may be blessed of our God for ever and ever!

"*Tuesday, 22nd.*—That subtle Cantab, with his logic, has almost robbed my Isabella of her tribute of love, he has so exhausted me. In the morning we were alone, and I arose much refreshed with sleep, and, after worship and breakfast, addressed myself to the work

of meditating the 5th chapter of the Hebrews in the original, which is so full of tender humanity. To this I added, in the garden, some reading on the high priest's office, in Godwin's 'Moses and Aaron.' And as I walked I had much elevation of soul to the heavenly thrones, with certain cogitations of God's neighbourhood to very holy men, so that to me it seemed not possible to say whether He might not still work manifest wonders by their hand. Not to convince them with visible demonstrations, for that is the Catholic solicitation for an idol; but to work spiritual wonders by their means. Thereafter I set myself to rough-hew my discourse, of which more when it takes shape; taking among hands the 'Roman History,' not without prayer that the Lord would open to me the mystery of his Providence, when, for the first time, (oh, unbelief!) it occurred to me that I was reading the rise of the fourth great monarchy into whose hands God had given the earth. The works of the Lord are wonderful—sought out are they of all those who take pleasure therein; so wonderful was the rise of Macedon and of Persia, for Babylon I have forgot. . . . . Another letter from Henry Paul, commending a Miss M—— to me as one of the people of God who wished to join our fold. She is welcome in the Lord's name. I could not see her, being occupied with a little circle of kinsfolk, who were Peter F——'s wife, and daughter, and mother. . . . They are on their way to join him at Dover: (how full of painful interest that place is now become! My Edward! oh, my Edward!) The mother wishes to get a housekeeper's situation, for which she is qualified, and desires your countenance;

so, while you are at Dumfries and Annan, I pray you to satisfy yourself of her character and ability, that we may help her, if we can. I commended them to the Lord after they had eaten bread with me. Thereafter I addressed myself to reading, being broke up for the day by this welcome interruption, until towards three, when I bore James P—— on his way to the inn, and returned to my own solitary meal; and after it I took myself much to task for want of temperance, which, after all, I have not yet attained to. It is a saying of one of the Fathers, 'In a full belly all the devils dance,' and Luther used to say, 'he loved music after dinner, because it kept the devils out.' But I believe the truth is, that temperance wrought by the Spirit is the only defence, of which I felt this day the lack, although my dinner was wholly of pea soup and potatoes; but I took too much, and was ashamed of the evil thoughts which have dared to show face in the temple of the Holy Ghost.

"I prayed the Lord to strengthen me in all time coming for His greater glory, and proceeded, about five, on my way to Mr. Barclay's, Fleet Market, taking by the way a brother of Hall's, whose house joins by the back of the church. Oh, Isabella, how frail we are! There was a sweet boy of nine years, who had never ailed anything in his life, brought in one day to the jaws of death, if he be not already consumed of it, by the croup; and a poor family, and, I fear, an ignorant one, with whom, having left my prayers and help, I proceeded on my way. The boy had said, 'Mother, do not fret; I must die some time, and I will go to heaven.' So would patient Edward have said, if he could have spoken anything. Love not

Margaret after the flesh, but after the spirit, my dearest wife. I went with fear and trembling to Mr. Barclay's, but with self-rebuke that I had not made it a day of prayer and humiliation for their sakes. I had besought the Lord, but I did not feel that He was found of me; and I had meditated, by the way, this one thought, kindred to what I set forth in my last letter, 'That when the Holy Ghost departs from any set of opinions, or form of character, they wither like a sapless tree.' Witness the preaching of Scotland, the voice of the Spirit of a former age; witness the high-flying Whigs of the Assembly, the armour-bearers of the covenanting Whigs of the Claim of Rights; witness the radical and political dissenters of England, the mocking-birds of the Nonconformists; witness the High Churchmen of England, who pretend to maintain what Ridley, and Latimer, and Hooper embodied. Aye, there is the figure; the doctrine is the vainest when the Spirit is gone. Meditate, Isabella, this deep mystery of the spirit in man quickened by the Holy Spirit. I had one meditation at home, 'That immortal souls, not written compositions, nor printed books, were the *primum mobile* of a minister's activity.' I found father, and mother, and two sisters, and from the first Mr. B—— opened his doubts and difficulties to me, by telling me that he hoped to be able to enter better into my new subject than into my former, but declaring that he had seen new views of his sinfulness, and brought to look to Christ alone for salvation, whom he looked upon as his Mediator, Intercessor, and Redeemer, but could not see as equal with God, though he was God's representative. I opened the great

mystery as I could, telling him at the same time it was only to be opened by the Holy Spirit, upon whose offices I enlarged, and went over a large field of demonstration with much satisfaction to them all, and deep emotion with the two daughters, whom I think the Lord our God is calling. Then we came to speak of dear David's death, by my recital of which they were very much moved, as also by my unfolding the blessed fruits of our Edward's removal. He has been much upon my mind this day. Dearest, I think light is breaking upon Mr. Barclay's mind. Pray for him; he is to mark his difficulties, which I am to do my endeavour to clear up. When I returned, here waited Miss W—— and a Mr. M'Nicol, from Oban, who, with his wife, desired the ordinance. . . . . Our chapter was the first seven verses of the fourteenth of Luke. What a touching appeal that parable of the sheep was for the poor publican to the Pharisees; how delicately reproved they were, themselves being allowed to be as men who needed no repentance compared with these sinners! Grant that ye are the unoffending, unstrayed children of the house; but here is one that has shipwrecked. May I not go and seek him as ye would a strayed sheep, and, if he return, will not the family forget their every-day blessedness in a tumult of joy? The Lord strengthened me in prayer, and now He hath strengthened me in this writing beyond my expectations. Kiss our beloved child for her father's sake. I heard of you both by those airy tongues that syllable men's names. . . . . Fear the Lord, my wife, always; fear the Lord! . . . . .

"*Wednesday*, 23*rd*.—This has been to me a day

of temptation from dulness and deadness in the divine life. I know not whence arising, if it be not from want of more patient communion with God in secret, and more frequent meditation of His holy Word. Oh, Isabella, there is no abiding in the truth but by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is not reasoning, or knowledge, or admonition, or council, or watchfulness, or any other form of spiritual carefulness and ability, but His own presence—His own Spirit, quick and lively, which maketh us tender, ready, discerning, in the ways of righteousness and iniquity. The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Dearest, mistrust reasonings, mistrust examples, mistrust prudential views, mistrust motives, and seek for an abiding, a constant spirit of holiness, which shall breathe of God, and feel of God, and watch in God, and care in God, and in all things reveal God to be with us and in us. A child possessed of the Holy Spirit is wiser to know righteousness from iniquity than the most refined casuist or the most enlightened divine. It is truly a spiritual administration, the present administration of our souls, and we see but as through a glass, but afterwards face to face. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall know as we are known. Oh, seek a presence, an ever-abiding presence of the Holy One, for yourself and your husband! Yet, though heavy in soul, I cried to the Lord very often, and He has heard my prayer. I know that we shall be tried with various tribulations, but we shall not be prevailed against. While I was occupied constructing my morning discourse, Mr. N—— came in, and we had a season of brotherly communion. His sisters go forward, all the

three, with one consent, and bear a loving heart to us and to all the people of God. They wished books to peruse, and I recommended to them Edwards' *History of Redemption*, to read along with the Old Testament history of the Church, and to prepare them for reading the New Testament history of the Church. Oh, that this was drawn up by one possessed of the Spirit of God, and not the spirit of history, who, in a short space and with a round pen, would draw it out after the manner of the books of Samuel and the Chronicles, adjoining to it specimens of the most pious writings of the Fathers, which might answer to the history, as the prophets answer to the Old Testament history. . . . . I also opened my lecture, which is to treat of the duty of the Church to support its ministers, for I perceive that, from want of being discoursed of, these great rudimental ideas of the Church have changed into convenient and expedient arrangements of human wisdom.

"I dined alone, and after dinner kept on with the History of Rome, whose age of tumults and domestic seditions I have arrived at, the condition of people, with plebeian institutions, who have lost the bond of religion, and the domestic and moral obligations resting on it. That tradition is remarkable of Julius Cæsar's having the vision of a man of great stature and remarkable appearance inviting him to cross the Rubicon, which paved the way to the empire, in which form it becomes a prophetic object, and has a prophetic character. I have resolved, nevertheless, to throw that part of my book * which derived its materials from the book of

* *Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed.*

Esdras, into a note, lest I should give encouragement to the prudential advocates of the Apocrypha. It is there that Julius Cæsar is a prophetic character. . . . . When we came to Mrs. David's, I had such a desire to deliver Brightwell from political leaning in the Slavery Abolition question, for I find they are to a man gone into the idea that Christianity must have the effect of making the slaves disquiet; that is, they lean so much to the political question, that even themselves say, until they are emancipated, it is vain that you seek to Christianize them. This is turning round with a vengeance; but it is so everywhere. Oh, my Isabella, how the sons of God are intermarrying with the daughters of men! Everywhere some evil spirit is seeking alliance with the Holy Spirit. This is to me an evidence that the deluge is at hand. Every day I feel more and more alone, and more and more rooted and grounded in the truth. The Lord make me faithful, though it were by the hating of father, and mother, and brother, and my own life. William Hamilton sees this matter as I do, and I found Dr. M—— saw the question of liberty as I do: these are the only two concurrences I have had in these broad and general questions since I came to visit you. But I thank God, in other matters of a private and personal kind, I am at one with all the children of God. Oh, out of what a pit the Lord hath brought me! How I abhor my former self and all my former notions! I was an idolater of the understanding and its clear conceptions; of the spirit, the paralysed, dull, and benighted spirit, with its mysterious dawnings of infinite and everlasting truth, I was no better than a blasphemer. Now the Lord give me grace to bear with those who are

what I lately was. This discourse wore me out, and, when I came to church, I was more fit for a couch and silence; but I sought strength, and, though I could not reach the subject in all its extent—'the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me'—I trust I was able somewhat to put the people on their guard against Satan's temptations, and establish the Church in Christ, their everlasting strength. . . . .

"*Thursday, 24th.* . . . . In this record, which I make daily for the comfort and edification of my dear wife, I desire God to be my witness and constant guide, lest I should at any time consult for the gratification of my own vanity, or warp truth from the great end of His glory, and the comfort of His saint. And may He not suffer the method which I pursue, of personal narrative, to betray me into any egotism or self-preference to the prejudice of holy truth! In the morning, our dear friend B. M—— came to breakfast, bringing (diligent man!) the sheets of the third volume of Bacon with him. He preferred to be with us during worship, and was very much affected, as I judge, by our simple service. We read that sublime evaluation of wisdom in the Book of Job (xxviii.), which was so appropriate to our dear friend's mind, though it came in course, and I was so stupid and dull, or overawed by his presence, as not to be able personally to apply it. Dearest Isabella, what a passage of Holy Writ that is! What a climax of sublimity, ranging through the profound mysteries of the bowels of the earth, and the knowledge of man and all his most valuable possessions, and through the earth and the hoary deep, and through death and the grave, till at length he finds it in the simplicity of

spiritual truth:—'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding.' It is equalled by the nineteenth chapter, which is in the pathetic what the other is in the sublime; expressing the uttermost dejection and desolation, and from the depths of it all piercing through gloomy time, and hoary ruin and waste, to the resurrection, when he should meet the Redeemer from all these troubles, and stand before Him in immortal being. My dear companion of thought, meditate these two chapters of inspiration; they will repay you well.

"The four German missionaries came in during prayer, and I think I had a spirit of supplication granted to me in interceding for their sakes. We had sweet discourse during breakfast. I think our dear friend is melting into sweeter moods, and overcoming himself not a little. I trust, by the grace of God, to see him a disciple of the Lord, humble and meek. His manner to me is utterly changed, permitting me to follow my own manner of discourse in things spiritual and divine. When breakfast was finished, I left him and James together, and brought the missionaries into the library, for they came to take leave. Then I opened to them the condition of the world, as presented to us in the prophecy, and the hopes to which they had to look forward; of the falling 'of the cities of the nations,' that is, the superstitions of the world. Then, as their constant encouragement, I read them the seventeenth chapter of John: their Lord's intercession for their sakes, which now He hath power also to accomplish, if they have faith in him. Oh, Isabella, it seemed to me a rich reward of all their labours, that they would be brought

to a nearer acquaintance with these most precious apostolic consolations, the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th chapters of John. Then I recounted to them my own missionary success in London, the hindrances of Satan, the enmities of my countrymen and their evil reports, the enemies in this place, and whatever else was raised up against me, in order to acquaint them with the wonderful works of God on my behalf, unworthy sinner, headstrong rebel, as I am. Then we joined in prayer, and I besought the Lord to be for home and friends, and wisdom and strength to these defenceless sheep, which were about to go forth among wolves. I made them write their names and nativities in my book, chiefly for your eye, seeing you are not permitted to see them before they go. I do again pray the Lord to be their guide and their prosperity.

"By this time the mourning coach had arrived, to carry me to the funeral of my beloved son in the Gospel, which took up, by Clerkenwell church, a Mr. T——, who, with his wife, are hearers in my church; with whom also I returned, and was enabled to speak clearly to his soul, without any shamefacedness, and, I trust, with pastoral love and fidelity. The truth drew tears from his eyes; whether the Lord may bless it to his spirit, He who is wise will witness. When we arrived, there were several assembled of her trusty friends and nearest kindred, and among others, Mr. A——, the counsellor. He began to remind me, in a voice little apt to mourning, or mindful of the sacredness of the house of mourning, that the last time we had met was at the house of feasting, dining with the lords at the Old Bailey; upon

which I felt it my duty, in order to overawe worldly intrusions, to take up that word and say that my friend had reminded me of our last meeting at the house of feasting, and that as it would have been thought very indecorous then to have obtruded the face or feeling of sorrow, so this house of sorrow and death had also its rights, which did not bear with the conversation of lively (minds) and worldliness; but with humble moods and downcast spirits, and mourning before the Lord, and other afflictive conditions of the soul; and when it was a Christian who was taken, and from Christians that he was taken, there should shine upon the troubled waters a gleam of light, and a hope of glory, and thankfulness, and joy: the joy of grief that he had escaped the troublous and chastening deep. This led to discourse that was profitable. . . . . Poor William wept very sore, but always sorest when I mingled religious warnings to him and counsels; then he turned his face and his eyes to me, as we walked together in the churchyard, and wept without restraint, as if he had said, Oh, forsake me not, forsake me not! And I will not forsake thee, my orphan boy, God not forsaking me. It drizzled and rained; several of the congregation were waiting there, to walk behind the company; and when he was lowered into the grave, I stood forth to declare the conquest of death and the grace of God, in the faith of our brother, and exhorted the people to be of a good and constant faith, after which we prayed and departed to our homes and occupations, I trust not without motions of the Holy Spirit to a better life. Then applying myself to study what short interval was left me, I proceeded to Bedford

Square. . . . . On my way, I called at Mr. H——'s, and found the old man growing worse; but he would not see me. That is very remarkable. I gather that he sees his partner. Dare he not bear my probe? It is wont to be very gentle; but she is a saint growing fast. . . . .

"*Friday, 25th November.*—This morning I arose rather worn and weary. . . . . I have all day experienced that trial which many have continually, of a troublous body, but am better now at night. This condition of my body and mind was not relieved by many interruptions, while I had upon me the weight of two discourses. First, Mr. Hamilton bringing me the tidings of Mr. H——'s illness; then Mr. Whyte, who called by appointment; then Mr. Dinwiddie posting with the same account of Mr. H——. I would they would help me, not beat me up as if I were slothful, when my poor soul is like to languish with too much exertion. But formality, formality, thou art man's scourge! and thou, spirit of truth and duty, thou art man's comforter! My elders have a nice idea of things being rightly managed, I wish they had the spirit of it; and I think that also is growing. Then came Miss D—— with the same tidings; and though I was in the midst of weakness with such a load on my mind, I went my ways with my papers in my pocket, having to meet Mr. W—— at Mr. Dinwiddie's at dinner. I found Mr. H—— shut himself up from my visits, although he saw both his medical man and his mercantile partner. I pray the Lord to be his Shepherd and comfort in my stead; and we prayed in the adjoining room, and afterwards I came down-stairs to study, being purposed to

wait as long as I could. Towards four Mrs. H—— came to me, and we had much discourse with one another. She told me of the saintly character of her father, and of Mr. H——'s grandfather. . . . . Why are there no such saints in Scotland now? Because their wine is mingled with water — their food is debased. It will nourish men no longer, but dwarflings. Oh, Scotland! oh, Scotland! how I groan over thee, thou, and thy children, and thy poverty-stricken church! Thy Humes are thy Knoxes, thy Thomsons are thy Melvilles, thy public dinners are thy sacraments, and the speeches which attend them are the ministrations of their idol. And the misfortune, dearest, is that the scale is falling everywhere in proportion, ministers and people, cities and lonely places; so that it is like going into the Shetland Islands, where, though you have the same plants, they are all dwarfed, and the very animals dwarfed, and the men also. So valuable is pure, unadulterated doctrine; so valuable is pure faithful preaching; so valuable is simple faith, and a single eye to the glory of God. How well the state of our Church, nay, of the Christian Church in general, is described by the account of the Laodicean Church. It almost tempts me to think more of the idea that these seven Churches are emblems of the seven ages of the Christian Church, to the last of which men are now arrived. My dear, if this is to be reformed, if it is to be withstood, and I have faith to undertake it, I think I must stand alone, for I can get no sympathy amongst my brethren. Dr. Gordon even has not had this revealed to him; and for Dr. Chalmers, he is immersed in civil polity and political economy, a kind of purse-keeper to the Church Apos-

tolic. And for Andrew Thomson, he is a gladiator of the intellect, his weapons being never spiritual, but intellectual merely, and these of an inferior order,—nothing equal to those that are in the field against him. Of these things I am calmly convinced; for these things I am truly troubled; and to be helpful to the removal of these things, I pray God for strength continually. You must be a helpmeet for me in this matter as in other matters, and, I pray you, for that as well as for your own blessedness, seek the purity of the faith, the *sincere* milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby. So I counselled dear Mrs. H——, when she looked out from those eyes so full of sorrow, so full of doubt, so full of supplication, and gave me her cold hand again and again, and often asking that I would remember them in my prayer.

"I walked melancholy enough along Burton Crescent, to see the church for the second time, which is now up to the level of the first windows, indeed above it, and in front the yellow stones are showing themselves above the ground, and when it is finished I doubt not it will be a seemly building. But may the Lord fill it with the glory of His own spiritual presence, and endow me with gifts to watch over the thousands who are to assemble therein! or raise up some other more worthy, and take me to His rest. Ah! how formality hath worn out the excellent faculties of the females at Burton Crescent, and the continual longing for that state and rank whence they have fallen! Oh, how thou dost skilfully take thy game, thou spirit of delusion! Oh Lord, deliver Thou their feet out of the net, I do humbly pray Thee; and give me grace to be

found faithful in this city of the dead. After dinner I opened my mouth to them all—Mr. Woodrow, Hamilton, Virtue, Aitchison—expounding to them the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and the withered trunk of form, ceremony, and mere doctrine which remained when He was gone; illustrating it by all things in which there was once a spirit of holiness, and which, during the last century, the most unspiritual, I think, we ever have had, faded away out of every thing; whereby we are become these meagre skeletons of saints and ministers which I lamented over. They had nothing to say in reply, and, if I might judge, were a good deal impressed with what I had testified. The Lord give it fruit! Mr. Woodrow and I came away at eight o'clock, and I bore him company through Russell Square. I think he is likely to be elected*, but it is by no means certain yet. The elders have been telling him that he must be more plain, as they are plain people; that is, he must not leave their beaten track; and that he must be shorter; that is, not interrupt their family arrangements of dinner, &c.; and that he must be more explicit in discourse, in order to gratify their desire of mere fragments of knowledge, instead of receiving the living continuity of spirit and soul which a discourse ought to be. Oh, that cutting of truth into bits is like dividing the body into fragments! death, death unto it! The truth should breathe continuous; the spirit of truth should inspire every member of a discourse, instead of our having it in those cold, lifeless limbs of abstract intellectual proportions. How your father would laugh at this! Nevertheless, tell him it is truth, though ill-expressed in my present feebleness of

* As minister of one of the Scotch churches in London.

conception. I told Woodrow if he yielded a scruple of his ministerial liberty I would call him brother no more, but impeach him of treason to the Great Prophet. Nevertheless, I encouraged him to be of good cheer, for he was a little cast down. I came home by Mr. H——'s, and found him as I had left him; but saw her not—only comforted poor Agnes, whom I met in the passage. Miss W—— came to prayers, and I trust the Lord was with us. The greater part of the afternoon I devoted to your ear, Tibby, which is to me more sweet audience than the ear of princes or of learned men. Fare thee well!

"*Saturday, 26th November.*—Yesterday and yesternight, dearest wife, I had many thoughts of our departed son, our first-born, and I was able to use David's words in the Psalm of that night, 'Thy judgments, O Lord, are just, and in righteousness hast thou afflicted me.' My dreams brought you and little Margaret before me, and I said, Dear Isabella, it is little Edward; and was not undeceived till I saw her small black eyes instead of his full-orbed blue, whose loving kindness was so dear to me even in death. But my dreams withal were very pleasant, and not afflicted with evil suggestions. This morning I have arisen fresh and lively, and have already nearly finished my discourses; and now, at three o'clock, am hastening to cover this sheet with sweet thoughts for your dear mind, that you may receive it before leaving Fife. Mr. H—— is no more in this world. He died about eleven o'clock, and I have now a letter from dear Agnes. May the Lord comfort the widow and the fatherless! I think I shall have time, after finishing this, to hasten down, though

it were but for a few minutes. Oh, Isabella! put nothing off, my dearest, put nothing off; have nothing to do, have all besought, have all believed, have all done, and live quietly unto eternity! Say so to your dear father and mother, and all the family. We know not what a day may bring forth. If you be languid, then cry for help; if you be under bondage, cry for deliverance; and abide believing, abide believing; opening your heart to the admonitions of the Holy One — your ear to admonitions of every faithful one. Turn aside from lies, from flattery, from vanity and folly. Be earnest, be grave—always ready. There will be no folly, nor laughter, nor bedimming of truth with false appearances, nor masquerading, in eternity. But I return. After prayer, in which I seek the spirit of prayer above all requests, for my soul wanders; there is an under-current of feeling, and even of thinking. It is very amazing we can speak to God so, and not to any mortal. I am oft to seek for an answer to man, when I am thinking of another matter; but I dare speak to God, though I am thinking of another matter. Oh! what is this, my dear Isabella? It is very lamentable, and I lament it very much. The Lord doth not hear us because we ask amiss. Now, my dear wife, make it for yourself and myself a constant prayer that we may have the spirit of prayer and supplication bestowed upon us; rather pause to recover the soul, than hurry on in a stream of words. I take it this must be still more felt by those who use forms, and that this is one of the chief advantages of the disuse of forms: but no means will charm forth the evil heart of unbelief. He only who hath all power in

heaven and earth is able — our Saviour and our Lord. Now I had almost forgotten that this is the day before your communion. It is stormy here, may it be quiet with you; and to the saints may it be a day of much refreshment! . . . .

"Now, with respect to your journey, if you set out on Thursday you must not go farther than Dumfries that week; and then open your mind to Margaret and James Fergusson concerning the things of the Spirit. Be not filled with apprehensions about baby. The Lord will prove your shield and hers. There is nothing will interest you till you come to the edge of my Dumfriesshire. . . . . After you go through Thornhill you pass the Campbell Water. . . . . Then, as you come to the Shepherd's bar, you are upon Allan Cunningham's calf-ground, and in the midst of a scene worthy of the Trosachs. . . . . Within four miles of Dumfries you pass through a village. That village my uncle Bryce founded for the people at the time of the French Revolution, when he wrote a book on *Peace*, seeing well that the spirit of anarchy was out; and a half-mile further on you will see Holywood Manse, a bow-shot from the road, and the church, where my uncle and aunt lie side by side. . . . . Now, for the rest, you will find a letter waiting you at Dumfries. . . . . The Lord guard you on your journey, and temper the blast to the little darling. . . . . It is now past four, and I hasten to salute Mrs. H——, widow, with the blessing of her husband, and the children, orphans, with the blessing of their father. Be at peace, full of faith and blessedness!

"*Saturday, 26th November.*—After putting your letter in the post-office, and still without any uplifting of the

soul that it might be safely conveyed to you, and arrive in good season (so doth custom eat out piety), I went directly to the H——'s; Mrs. H——, the most composed, being manifestly full of faith, and by faith supported; and I felt moved with much fellow-feeling. She spoke of his kindness to all—of his charity to the poor—of his constant cheerfulness in a most perplexing and tried life—of his faith in Christ, though it had little outward appearance,—of all which I was well pleased to hear. We then went upstairs, and, having assembled the family, I sought to apply to them the 130th Psalm and the 4th and 5th of 1st Thessalonians: showing them that the only hope was in Christ Jesus either for themselves or the departed. Then I proceeded to Mr. W——, and received Mr. Bell's instructions for you. The place is Bossal, near York. . . . You must go to the George Inn, York, which is the posting-house, and take a post-chaise to the house, where you are expected with much delight; and may it be delightful to us all. Mrs. W—— is better. We had very sweet discourse, in which I was enabled to maintain faithfully the truth,—I fear, not so much in the love of it as I could desire. And, oh! I am pressed with the desire of nearer communion to the divine throne! There is something in my spirit very paralytic there. Oh, that I could pray unto the Lord—even with what affection I write these letters! I do earnestly pray the Lord to take the veil off my heart, and I believe in good time He will. . . . Now I go to seek the Lord in secret for us all. Farewell!

"*Sunday, 27th November.*—I have reason to bless the Lord, my dear Isabella, for His strengthening and

encouraging presence this day, both in the ministry of the Word and of prayer; which I receive as His wonderful patience with my unworthiness, and as a sign that His hand is towards me for good. In the morning prayer I was better able to abstract my soul from under thoughts, and to stand with my people before the Lord. I have been led to think more concerning that undercurrent of thought during prayer, and I perceived it to be owing to our infidelity. The living and true God, with His acts and attributes, is not present to our spirit; but our own ideas of Him, and customs of discourse, which the mind presents while thinking of other things, as it doth in many other cases. . . . Therefore it is the awe of God's presence—the reality of His presence—by which the soul is to be cured of this evil—this heinous evil. It is the feeling of this want which has introduced pictures and statues among the Catholics, and I take it to be the same which makes the Episcopalian attached to forms. But nothing will do, dear, but His own presence—the presence of His own invisible Spirit in our hearts, crying unto our Father which is in heaven. Prayer, my dearest, is the complaint of the Holy Spirit under His incarnation in our hearts. Our chapter in the morning was the 5th of Hebrews, comprehending Christ's priesthood. But I find I have not strength for unfolding these high matters. My beloved, fare thee well! My baby, the blessing of the Lord upon thee!

"In considering the priestly office of Christ, be at pains to separate it from the prophetic. . . . My discourse was on justification by faith alone. . . . And I concluded with exhortations to humility, and an abiding

sense of the Saviour's righteousness, and of our own wickedness, and of a new principle derived from the former which should be generative of a set of works truly good, truly holy, truly blessed. In the evening I read the sweet and picturesque account of Isaac's courting, and took occasion to press the fidelity of the servant in all points, and to point out the verisimilitude which the narrative bore with the manners of the ages nearest to those times. I discoursed concerning the duty of the Church to their ministers in respect to support; yet handling the subject largely and widely, with the view of demonstrating the total disproportion between moral and spiritual services and pecuniary rewards,—showing them my favourite maxim, that money is the universal falsehood, and the universal corruption, when we use it for discharging obligations contracted by spiritual or moral services. For example, if you think the wage discharges you of your obligation to Mary, you are deceived out of so much spiritual feeling as should have repaid her, and corrupted into a worldling; and so if Mary were to think her obligations discharged by works; and so of all giving of gifts to express sentiments. They do express the sentiment, but discharge it they can never. This was a very fertile topic of discourse, and full of warning to the worldly people. There were very large congregations to hear, and I trust they were edified. Our service extended to three hours in the morning, and two hours and a half in the evening, and I find I cannot relax. . . .

"*Monday*, 28*th*.—This morning Sottomayor the soldier was with us, and James and I, partly of charity,

partly of veneration to the old Spanish character and literature, have agreed to take lessons in Spanish at seven every morning, which will curtail this letter. So we have provided us in Bibles, with which we are to begin, and afterwards we shall read Don Quixote. . . . . Then there came Mr. M—— to read with me the Greek Testament, and we gave ourselves to the 6th chapter, which I will open to you in some other place. I think the Lord, by the help of Father Simon, hath enabled me to understand it. Oh, I thank God for the change upon that young man! Even P——, who is very judicious, and was with him an hour alone, could discern in him no superciliousness nor conceit. He is very docile, and is to come every Monday for an hour or two. I hope to do for him what others have done for me. . . .

"*Tuesday*, 29*th*.—Last night I endured the temptation of many evil thoughts and imaginations, which the good Spirit of God enabled me to overcome, although it was a great trouble and vexation to my soul. . . . . Such an almighty and infinite work is the sanctification of the soul! Our Lord hath said, 'Satan cometh and findeth nothing in me.' Alas! how otherwise with us! The Holy Spirit cometh and findeth nothing in us! . . . What a work is the sanctification of a soul! It is second only to its redemption; and to that second only in place and order, not in degree. In the morning, we started at seven o'clock to the Book of Samuel, and made out one chapter with Giuseppe Sottomayor, who commends himself more and more to my esteem as a man of true principle and piety. I think the work of conviction goes on in his mind. He breakfasted and

worshipped with us; after which I came to my study, and did not rise, except to snatch a portion of dinner, till five o'clock. In that time I did little else than study a chapter in the Hebrew Bible, and read Poole's *Synopsis* upon it, which is written in Latin, with abundant Hebrew and Greek quotations, that occupy me well—insomuch that, if my time will allow, I purpose doing the same daily. For I fell in with a dictionary, which I can consider little else than a providential gift, in two handy little quarto volumes,—a Latin dictionary, which renders the word into Hebrew, Greek, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Dutch; so that it is to me a continual assistance of the memory, besides affording a perpetual delight in tracing the diversity and analogy of languages, in which I had always great pleasure. . . . During my solitary study I received two sweet interruptions—one in the shape of a messenger from a far country, coming from one dear to you, but dearer to me, and who loves me too well to love herself well. Now, who is that? and who is that messenger? A riddle which I take you to resolve. . . . The messenger was from yourself, in the shape of a letter, laying out your plans of travel, and making merry with my scheme. Now Kant's *Metaphysics* was not in my mind, but that better authority, the road-book. For you must know that, setting off on Monday morning, I can be in York, you at Bossal, to breakfast on Tuesday. . . . So that you see there is neither Kantian negation of space and time, nor the wings of love, in the matter; but simple, prosaic, stage-coach locomotion. . . . Being so far, I went on to Bedford Square. . . . But there is no getting a spiritual

discourse maintained: you can but set it forth in intellectual parables, which are nothing so efficient as the parables for the sense which our Lord was accustomed to use. But, dearest, we must either speak in parables to the world, or we must be silent; or we must present a wry and deceptive form of truth; or we must cast our pearls before swine. Of which choice the first is to be preferred, and our Lord therefore adopted it. Because a parable is truth veiled, not truth dismembered; and as the eye of the understanding grows more piercing, the veil is seen through, and the truth stands revealed. Now, parables are infinite; besides those to the imagination, they are to the intellect in the way of argument, to the heart in the way of tender expression and action, and to the eye in the way of a pure and virtuous carriage. And the whole visible demonstration of Christian life is, as it were, an allegorical way of preaching truth to the eyes of the world; whether it be wisdom in discourse, or charity in feeling, or holiness in action. But I wander. I returned home about seven, and addressed myself to write my action sermon*; but found myself too fatigued to conceive or express aught worthy of the subject—'Do this in remembrance of me'—and I know not whether anything may be yielded to me this night worthy of it. . . . I trust our meeting may be blessed to add gifts to us mutually. I am truly happy to anticipate it so much sooner.

"You are now among my dear kindred, who I know will be very kind to you, for your own sake and for mine. I owe them all a great debt of love and affec-

* The name usually given in Scotland to the sermon preached before the communion.

tion, which I shall never be able to repay. I look to you to drop seasonable words into their ears, especially concerning their salvation and their little ones. For nothing is so fatal to Scotland as lethargy. I trust they are not nominal Christians; but I would fain have deeper convictions of so important a matter. I pray you not to yield anything to your natural kindness at the expense of your health, and risk of the infant; but in all things, as before the Lord, to take the steps which you judge the best, looking to His blessing. To this also I charge you by your love and obedience to me. This day is very fine. I hope you are on your journey; and I earnestly pray you may travel as Abraham did, at every resting-place setting up an altar to God in your heart. We remember you night and morning in our prayers; and I trust that the Lord will graciously hear us. At Annan I have nothing for you to say particularly, but to assure them of my most dutiful love and constant prayers, and to entreat them not to slumber. . . . The Lord bring you in safety to my bosom, and to your home. I know you will care for Mary in everything as one of the family, and bound to us by many acts of faithfulness and love.

"*Wednesday*, 30*th November*.—My dear Isabella, I am daily loaded with the tokens of the Lord's goodness, which I regard with the more wonder and gratitude, as I have been this week more than ordinarily tried with inward trials; and to receive tokens of love from a friend, when we are wavering in our fealty, is also always very full of rebuke. But I have withstood Satan according to my ability, and he hath not been allowed to prevail over me, nor will, I trust, by the

continuance of unfailing prayers. . . . . So you see, my dear, what tokens I have of the Lord's blessing; there are not fewer than thirty-five who have come seeking to be joined to the Church at this time; and no other season have I observed the same zeal, and intelligence, and faith. Oh, that the Lord for their sakes would furnish me with good! I lament much that so few of the Scotch youths are drawn. I think there is not much above one-third Scotchmen. I trust the Lord will draw near to them. I think they can hardly fail either to leave the congregation altogether, or to join the Church, my preaching has been of late so separating. . . . This letter will reach you at Annan, where, individually and collectively, I pray my dutiful affection and ministerial blessing to be given by you. Farewell! and may the Lord be your shade to-morrow in your journey southward!

"*Thursday*, 1*st December*.— The beginning of a new month, my dearest, wherein let us stir up our souls to more lively faith in these great and precious promises which we inherit from the death of our Lord, which you have so lately, and which we are so soon about to commemorate. I look back upon the last month as one in which I have had various experiences of good and evil — encouragements beyond all former experience, and trials of Satan proportioned thereto. . . . . I have had many revelations, and beckonings, and overtures to enter into the temple's inmost place, which I shall yet do, if the Lord permit. If I allowed anxiety to prey upon me, I would now be anxious for you and the child, having seen by the papers that so much snow is fallen in the North. But the Lord, who sendeth His

ice as morsels, and giveth the snow like wool, and scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes, will not let it alight upon you without good and gracious ends, for the very hairs of your head are numbered. I have had a good deal of conversation this night with Mr. Hunter, who is returned from the North, concerning the comparative fatigue and comfort of posting and travelling by the mail, and he says for both reasons, but especially for less exposure to the cold, the mail is to be preferred. . . . . Take wise counsel in the matter. I had a very pleasant call this morning from Mr. W——, desiring, by conversation with me, to express his forgiveness of his friend, and to purge himself of all malice and revenge, before bringing his gift to the altar. . . . . After he was gone, I sought to continue my discourse, and, when I had laid down my pen to enter upon my Hebrew studies, I was interrupted by the call of a young lady, who had stolen to me, having heard me preach, and thinking me likely to listen to her. . . . . I thought the struggle between shamefacedness and fear on the one hand, and her desire of counsel on the other, would have wholly overpowered her. I found she had been taught of the Spirit without knowing it, and, when I taught her by the Word, it was sweet to witness the response of her soul pronouncing the Amen, 'That I know,' 'That I feel is true.' She is one in a family, and the rest have no fellowship with her. . . . .

"A proof-sheet occupied me till dinner, and after dinner I read the Roman History till towards six, when I had to meet my young communicants, to introduce them to the session. There was a goodly

number of them present, to whom I addressed a word of instruction concerning the infinite honour to which they were admitted, and the duties which devolved upon them in their Christian calling. . . . . I had received a letter from Andrew P——, desiring that his mother might be remembered in our prayers, as one looking for death. This moved me to go and see the afflicted servant of Christ, whom I found brought very low, and not likely to recover again, her children rejoicing in her joy, and content to part with her to the joy of her Lord. So the arrows of the Lord are flying on all sides of us. This made it past eleven when I got home, and I found Mr. Murray sitting to inform me that he was about to become 'a Benedict,' which means blessed,—which means a husband. I wish them all happiness. And so was I hindered from fulfilling this duty, being overladen with sleep, and worn out with labour. . . . .

"*Friday, 2nd December.*—This morning, dearest, I felt, when called at seven, the effects of yesterday's labour, and was not able to arise, from headache, which I durst not brave, having such a weight of thought and action before me; therefore I lay still, endeavouring to sleep it off, and rose not till half-past nine, when, descending quietly, I sought to get to work without interruption, and, thank God, have made out a good day's work, being well-nigh finished with my action sermon; and, for the rest, I am very much disposed to depend upon the Spirit to give me utterance. For to-morrow, all the morning I have to be helpful to Mrs. H——, and the evening I have to preach to the people. After working with my pen, I took an interlude of history, walk-

ing in the garden, when my thoughts are fullest of our darling. But, indeed, I know not how it is, I think the last two or three days I have been thinking of him too much, and last night I dreamed he was in life, and, though drooping like a flower, giving hope of health again. He was on your knee, and I thought I caught the first sign of hope—to seize him and carry him into the fresh air, when it all vanished before me into the sad reality. Then I addressed myself to my Hebrew studies, at which I continued till I went forth to minister comfort to Mrs. H——'s family, with whom I worshipped, opening to them that Psalm of divine sorrow (the xlii.) where the Psalmist, in all his sorrows, sees nothing to lament but his distance and separation from the house of God, and the communion of His people. I came back at half-past eight, having several appointments with those who had not spoken to me in time, yet sought with earnestness to approach the table of the Lord. And now, more briefly and less feelingly and spiritually than I would have desired, have I set forth to you the incidents of Thursday, which to my soul hath been a day of consolation. Oh, that the Lord would break these bands of sleep—these heavy eyelids of drowsiness, my beloved wife, and awake us to the full vision of the truth and possession of the things of faith! You are now, I trust, by the mercy of God, seated beside my most honoured parents, to whom I present my dutiful affection, praying the Lord to compass them with His grace; and, oh, tell them to press inwards to the temple; not to rest, but to press onward. Exhort them from me to have no formality. Tell them that, until religion cease to be a burden, it is

nothing—till prayer cease to be a weariness, it is nothing. However difficult, and however imperfect, the spirit must still rejoice in it, after the inward man. . . If I write much longer, you will not be able to read; for there is a great combination against me—a weary hand, a heavy eye, a pen worn to the quick, a dull mind, and a late hour; and a day before me of much occupation. Therefore, farewell to all that are with you, and to all with whom you abide!

"*Saturday.*—I thought, my dearest, to have finished this before the post, but have been taken up all the morning, till two o'clock, doing the last duties to our beloved friend, Mr. H——; and having to preach to-night, I rather choose to take up the only hour that is left me in meditation for so many souls. The Lord bless you, and the house in which you dwell! I trust in the grace of God to sustain me to-morrow, and to give you a good journey.

"The Lord bless my father's house!

"Your affectionate husband,

"EDWARD IRVING."

"If you take the mail from Carlisle, you should take it only to Kattrick Bridge, or, perhaps, a stage farther. I think it is but eighteen miles from Kattrick Bridge, and the landlord seemed to me a very pleasant old man. If the time of leaving Carlisle be too soon, you could perhaps go on a stage or two the night before. The Lord direct you in all things!

"Forget not the shoes—I care not how many pairs, only pay for them; for my mother will always make herself a beggar for her children."

Thus concludes a journal which, perhaps, has no parallel in modern days. A picture so minute, yet so broad — a self-revelation so entire — a witness so wonderful of that household love, deepened by mutual suffering and sorrow, which so far transcends in its gravity and soberness the more voluble passions of youth — has never, so far as I am aware, been given to the world. It is not wonderful that over the vicissitudes of more than a quarter of a century, the scattered remnants of the family, once admitted, even in part, to the secret soul of such a man, should remember these letters with a certain tearful exultation, the traces of the departed glory; nor that the wife, to whom all were addressed, should have cherished them to the last as too sacred for common sight. This is the first and only journal of Irving's life. On various occasions afterwards, he was separated from his wife for considerable periods — but never again produced anything like the affecting history, at which he laboured day by day and hour by hour, to cheer the mother of his dead baby, as she lay, weak and sorrowful, in the faintest hour of a woman's life, in the sad affectionate shelter of her father's house. Few men or heroes have been laid in their grave with such a memorial as envelopes the baby name of little Edward; and I think few wives will read this record without envying Isabella Irving that hour of her anguish and consolation.

CHAPTER XII.

1826, 1827.

AFTER the full and detailed personal portrait which Irving gives of himself in these journal-letters, a period of comparative silence follows. This was the silent seed-time of the exciting and exhausting years, full of conflict and struggle, upon the threshold of which he stood. The full flood of life which now carried him along was not more visible in his actual labours than it was in the eager progress of his unresting and ever-active spirit. Whether his mind had ever been content with the sober Presbyterian ideal of a democratic Church, in which the will of the people had really, if not nominally, a distinct and apparent sway, and in which the priests were subject to the perpetual criticism of a community too much disposed to argument and individual opinion to yield much veneration to their legitimate leaders, it is difficult to say; but the Scotch imagination has always found a way of escaping from those prosaic trammels. That which the outside world has distinguished as religious liberty, and recognised as the object of the many struggles in which the Church of Scotland has engaged, has never been so named or considered among the champions of that Church. Their eyes, throughout the long and eventful drama, have been fixed, not upon the freedom

of individual worship, or the rights of the Christian people, but upon a much loftier, ineffable principle, often converted into an instrument of evil, yet always retaining, to some, the divinest sunshine of ideal perfection. Now-a-days, when martyrdoms are no longer possible, and heretical stakes and blocks are long ago out of fashion, it is more difficult than it once was, to idealise, out of a struggle for mere ecclesiastical authority, that conflict which, in the days of blood and violence, so many humble heroes waged for the headship of Christ. To many a Scotch confessor this doctrine has stood instead of a visible general, animating the absolute peasant-soul to so distinct a conception of Christ's honour and authority, as the object for which it contended, that the personal ardour of the conflict puzzles the calm observer, who understands as nothing but a dogma this inspiring principle. The events which made the great crisis in the existence of Scotland a struggle for her faith, drove this lofty visionary conception into the ideal soul of the nation, where it has ever since existed, and is still appealed to, as the experience of to-day can testify. When, according to the evidence of facts, the Covenanters were fighting against the imposed liturgy and attempted episcopacy of the Charleses, they were, to their own fierce consciousness, struggling for the principle that, in the Church, Charles was nothing, and Christ all in all; nor has the sentiment failed in more recent struggles. Irving had received this national creed along with his earliest impressions: he had even received it in the still closer theocratic model well known in ancient Scotland, where God the ruler was everywhere visible, in provi-

dence, judgment, and mercy. But his impassioned soul led him to reconstruct upon these sublime elements another ideal of a Church than that which has long been supreme in Scotland. Unconsciously his thoughts elevated themselves, and grew into fuller development; unconsciously he assumed in his own person the priestly attitude, and felt himself standing between God and the people. Then the community itself rose under his glowing gaze into a baptized world,—a Christendom separated by the initiatory ordinance of Christianity, of which Christ was the sole head. The longer he contemplated this world, the more it rose out of the region of doctrine into that of reality. That Lord became no distant Presence, but a Person so intensely realised and visible, that the adoring eye perceived the human pulses throbbing in His veins; and for awe, and love of that mysterious union, the worshipper could not keep silence. That faith became no system of words, but a divine evidence and substantial proof of the unutterable glories; that baptism grew out of a symbol and ceremony into a Thing,—an immortal birth, to which God Himself pledged His word. One can see this wonderful process going on in the transparent, vehement spirit. Everything suffered a change under those shining eyes of genius and passion. From impersonal regions of thought they rose into visible revelations of reality. To a mind instinct with this realising principle, the conception of a Second Advent nearly approaching was like the beginning of a new life. The thought of seeing His Lord in the flesh cast a certain ecstasy upon the mind of Irving. It quickened tenfold his already vivid apprehension of spiritual things. The burden of

the prophetic mysteries, so often darkly pondered, so often interpreted in a mistaken sense, seemed to him, in the light of that expectation, to swell into divine choruses of preparation for the splendid event which, with his own bodily eyes, undimmed by death, he hoped to behold. He had commenced his labours, and the studies necessarily involved in those labours, with a certain expansion of spirit, and power of sublimating whatever truth he touched, but no apparent divergence from ordinary belief. But years of close dwelling upon the sacred subjects which it was his calling to expound, had borne their natural fruit. Not yet had he *diverged;* but he had expanded, intensified, opened out, in an almost unprecedented degree. Special truths, as he came to consider them, glowed forth upon his horizon with fuller and fuller radiance; life and human affections seemed to go with the adventurer into those worlds of believed but not appreciated divinity; and, as he himself identified one by one those wonderful realisations, which were to him as discoveries, with ever a warmer and fuller voice he declared them aloud.

Such was his state of mind in the comparatively silent, and in some respects transition, period to which we have now reached. His first sorrow did but strengthen the other influences at work upon him, while at the same time his many and continual labours acting upon his health, obliged him to withdraw a little from the din and excitement of his battle-field, and left him fuller scope for his thoughts. In his winter solitude, while his wife was absent, he had begun, more from benevolent motives than with any idea of making use of the accomplishment, to study Spanish; but, before

he had made any great advances in the language, a manner of turning the new gift to the profit of the Church came, by a complication of causes—to his eyes clearly providential—in his way. A Spanish work, entitled "The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty," professedly written by Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, a Hebrew convert to Christianity, but in reality, according to the facts afterwards ascertained, the production of a Jesuit priest, called Lacunza, was brought to him, as he describes in his preface to the translation of that work, by friends who had been specially impressed by his own views on the same subject. He found in it, as he declares, "the hand of a master," and not only so, but "the chief work of a master's hand;" and feeling assured that his God had sent this "masterpiece of reasoning" to him "at such a critical time, for the love of His Church, which He hath purchased with His blood," he resolved "to weigh well how I might turn the gift to profit." The result of his ponderings was, that he undertook the translation of the book, concluding, after his fashion, that the Church was as open to receive instruction, wheresoever it came from, as he himself was. Not very long before, he had stood up against the champions of Catholic emancipation, taking, without a moment's hesitation, the unpopular side of the question, and declaring with the utmost plainness that, "though it expose me to odium in every form, I have no hesitation in asserting it to be my belief that when the rulers of this nation shall permit to the worshippers of the Beast the same honours, immunities, and trusts which they permit to the worshippers of the true God, that day will be the blackest in the history of

our fate." But in the face of these uncompromising sentiments, and almost in a breath with the expression of them, he comes, with characteristic candour and openness, to the feet of the Spanish priest, receives his book "as a voice from the Roman Catholic Church," just as he claims for his own preaching to be "as a voice from the Kirk of Scotland," and finds it his duty to interpret between the Jesuit preacher and the English world. A better illustration of the native candour and simplicity of his mind could not be. Few Protestant preachers would take upon themselves such an office; and those who could believe their own views enforced and supported by the concurrence of a Catholic writer, would be, according to ordinary rules, men of tolerant, not to say latitudinarian, principles,—not rigid upon points of difference. Of a very different kind was the toleration of Irving. It was not toleration at all, indeed, nor any modern convenience, but simple love for all who loved his Master's appearing, and unfailing belief in the human utterance which speaks out of the abundance of men's hearts. The same voice which had just declared its horror at the thought of political equality for the Catholics, and doubtless had been anathematised as the voice of a bigot in consequence, declares, immediately after, the determination of the speaker to give no Protestant comment upon the Jesuit's simple words. "The doctrines of the Roman Church," he says, "which now and then appear, are brought forward with so much simplicity and sincerity of faith, and so little in the spirit of obtrusion or controversy, that it seemed to me like taking an advantage of the honest, well-meaning man to enter the lists

against him, unaccoutred as he was. . . . . Oh, no! I had no heart to catch him tripping, or to expose the weakness of so dear a teacher, concerning whom I was continually exclaiming to the companion of my solitary labours, 'I hope yet, in some of my future pilgrimages, to meet this gray-haired saint in the flesh, and receive his blessing, while I tell him how much I love him, and have profited from his instructions.'"

This contrast of sentiment will possibly puzzle some observers. Irving, it is evident, was not careful to preserve his consistency; but it is difficult to make out how a man who laboured so lovingly over this priest's book, and presented him, all Jesuit as he was, to the Protestant world, as a teacher to whom he himself looked up, could be much of a bigot, even though he took the most uncompromising and decided position on the political question of Catholic disabilities. His views on political questions generally seem to have been forming at this time into a more decided shape than they had hitherto possessed. Out of the eclectic personal creed of a professional man, to whom politics were secondary, they had consolidated into something which from the outside looks like High Toryism, in its most superlative and despotic development. His frequent references to the "Convocation-book," described in his letters, and the conclusion he arrives at, that subjects are not justifiable in taking up arms against their lawful governors, seems, at the first glance, a singular principle for the descendant and champion of the Covenanters; but it belongs, as naturally as any other development of doctrine, to the elevation and growth of all his thoughts. To him, with whom

the limit of practicability told for nothing, and whose business was with the far more generally forgotten or slighted ideal form of things, the consideration of how it would work was out of the question; enough men there were in the world to consider that; his work was entirely of another description. To his eyes, full of sublimating light, the secular forms of government stood forth like the spiritual, in all the authority of Divine origin. The nation was a Christian nation, perilling its very existence by the admission into power of any who did not recognise the principle of its being. The powers that be were ordained of God. The purity of the national faith was the safeguard of its life, and the ark of national safety was in danger the moment that unhallowed hands touched or approached it.

Such was the political creed of the fervid Scotch preacher, when the world was palpitating around him with Catholic struggles and the early essays of Reform. Almost all the strength of contemporary genius went with the popular stream. He, all old-world and unprogressive, stood against the tide. How circumstances could modify belief, or individual and temporary hardships set aside everlasting truth, it was not in him to understand, nor did he enter into the less or more practicable degrees of national virtue. His stand was taken upon the absolute. From this point of view he protested against the abolition of tests, against the emancipation of Catholics, and, most of all, against the great atheistical principle, as he held it, that power was derived from the people instead of from God. Upon this, as upon the antipodes of those lofty

politico-religious principles which he himself held like a prophet in a world consciously ruled of God, he looked with horror. Such elevated theories of government are not always necessary to disgust thoughtful men with the doubtful and unreliable impulses of popular supremacy. But Irving's views were not founded upon any calculation of results. To put power into the hands of any man who was not ready, and, indeed, eager, to declare himself a follower of Christ, according to the apparent means of Christ's own appointing, was an act of national sacrilege to him who considered himself bound to obey that power when exercised, as the ordinance of God. Thus a political creed, which time and the hour have made obsolete, as being all impracticable, flashed forth into life in the hands of a champion who thought only of right, and never of practicability. Whatever may be said of those doctrines of Divine right and religious government, which by times have been perverted by human ingenuity into the most horrible instruments of cruelty and national degradation, the grand idea of a Christian nation, governed by Christians, on the broad basis of that law which is good-will to man, as held by such a mind as that of Irving, must always remain a splendid imagination: no vulgar political belief, although it called forth from the optimist demonstrations of his own strenuous sentiments, which were swept off, all futile and unavailing, before the inevitable tide.

Early in the year 1826, the work of Ben-Ezra came into Irving's hands, confirming and strengthening his heart in respect to the new revelation of doctrine which had already illuminated his path. He had

begun his Spanish studies only a few months before, with the view of helping his friend, Giuseppe Sottomayor; and it was not until summer that he undertook the translation of the book which had impressed him so deeply. He had, by this period, so exhausted his strength in his ordinary pastoral labours, that his congregation became anxious about his health, and insisted on the necessary rest and relaxation which alone could recruit him. "About this time," as he himself says, "it pleased the Lord to stir up the greater part of my flock to exhort me by all means, as I valued my own health and their well-being, to remove a little from the bustle and intrusion of this great city, and abide in the country during some of the summer months; and two of the brethren who loved me much engaged, unknown to me, a place in the country, where, without forsaking my charge, I might reside in peace and quietness amidst the beauty and bounty with which God hath covered the earth. This occurring so unexpectedly, at the time when all concerned were soliciting me to undertake the whole care and responsibility of the translation, and perceiving that the work was likely to suffer from a divided labour, without being at all hastened, I resolved at length, insufficient as was my knowledge of the language at that time, to conquer all difficulties and heartily to give myself to the Lord and to His Church during these weeks of retirement; for I was well convinced that the health which I most needed was the healing waters of the Holy Spirit, which I thus made bold to solicit, by devoting myself to His service; and certainly the labourer was not disappointed of his hire. I prevented

the dawning of the morning, and I envied the setting in of the shades of evening to labour in my work; and when my hands and my eyes failed me, because of weakness, the helper whom God hath given meet for me served me with hers, and so we laboured to bring this labour of love to completion, purposing to offer it to the Church as our Christmas offering. Oh, that my brethren in Christ might have the same divine satisfaction and unwearied delight in reading, that I had in translating this wonderful work!"

It would be difficult to add to without impairing the perfection of this beautiful sketch of the summer leisure which Irving "gave to the Lord." The retirement of the pair, so wonderfully united in labour and sympathy, was at Beckenham; where, with that child of tears over whom they could not choose but watch with double solicitude, they lived in quiet, at least, if not in repose, for the greater part of the summer. During all this time, Irving went up to London every Saturday, remaining until Monday, to fulfil his usual laborious ministerial duties; and in the interval laboured, as he has described, at the work — perhaps of all literary labours the most tiresome and wearing out — of this translation. Such was his version of relaxation and ease. He worked at it so closely, that he was at one time threatened with loss of sight in consequence — those strong out-of-doors eyes of his evidently not having been adapted by nature for poring perpetually over print and paper. However, he appears to have known the true medicine for his own case. The village quiet, and incidental advantages, passively enjoyed, of fresh air and summer

greenness, comforted and refreshed his heart, as he sat labouring with his imperfect Spanish over the long treatise of Lacunza; and, in the calm of those toils, his health returned to him. The defect in his eyes even helped him to find out the auxiliary which was at hand, and of which in after times he largely availed himself. "I rejoice to tell you that Edward is very much better," writes Mrs. Irving to her sister. "He has now made me almost entirely his amanuensis. I even write his discourses, which to him is a most wonderful relief. This will surprise you when you remember he could bear no one in the room with him; still he can bear no one but myself; but he can stop and give ear to my observations." . . . . And the anxious mother diverges from this description into expressions of subdued alarm lest baby should have the whooping-cough, and a wife's tender admiration of her husband's increasing fondness for the child. Once more the strain is idyllic; but the fond woman's letters, in which "dear Edward" appears as the centre of everything, invested with a certain impersonal perfection, do not convey so clear a picture out of the bosom of that domestic happiness, tranquillity, anxiety, love, and labour — the sublime but common course of life — as the brief words in which he himself commemorates the summer scene. It was a halcyon moment, subdued by the touch of past sorrow, and that trembling which experience so soon brings into all mortal enjoyment, yet sweet with the more exquisite happiness which only those who have sorrowed and trembled together can snatch out of the midst of their years.

This laborious retirement had been preceded by the toils and excitements of a London May, with all its calls upon the powers and the patience of the great orator. One of the religious meetings of the season was distinguished by an oft-told incident — one of the common wonders which have established Irving's character for eccentricity among those who know little more of him than is conveyed by such anecdotes. This was the meeting of the Hibernian Bible Society, at which, the previous year, he had made so remarkable an appearance, denouncing and resisting the terror or complacency with which its members yielded to a popular outcry. This year — probably, as one of his friends suggests, that he might offer his support as openly as his rebuke — he gave his watch, till he should be able to redeem it, to the subscription in aid of the Society. It is the only incident standing out from this tranquil period of his life.

During the summer of 1826, while Irving was busied with his translation, the expectation conveyed in this Spanish book, to which his own mind and that of many others had been directed, with special force and clearness, not very long before, seems to have swelled within the minds of all who held it, to such an amount of solemn excitement and inquiring interest as could no longer keep silence. If the advent of the Lord were indeed close at hand; if events were visibly marching forward to that great visible era of doom and triumph, as so many students of prophecy concurred in believing — it was but natural that a hope so extraordinary should bring the little brotherhood into a union far more intimate than that of mere concurrence

in belief. The bond between them was rather that personal and exciting one which exists among a party full of anxiety for the restoration or election of a king —a patriotic band of conspirators furnished with all the information and communications in cipher which cannot be given at length to the common mass — than the calmer link between theologians united in doctrine; and indeed one wonders more at the steady pertinacity of human nature which could go on in all the ordinary habitudes of the flesh under the solemn commotion of such a hope, than at any kind of conference or extraordinary consultation which might be held under the circumstances. "A desire to compare their views with respect to the prospects of the Church at this present crisis" naturally arose among them, as Irving informs us in the preface to *Ben-Ezra;* and after several meetings during the summer, a serious and lengthened conference on the subject was arranged to take place at Albury, the residence of one of the most remarkable of the little prophetic parliament, the late Henry Drummond.

It is unnecessary to enter into any history of this remarkable man, who was but the other day, in the full force of his wonderful individuality, taking his part in all the affairs of the world. That individuality was too marked and striking to permit any calm, general opinion of the merits of a man who was at once a religious leader, and the patron of religious distress throughout the world; an independent influence, and most caustic critic in the British parliament; a believer in all the mysteries of faith, yet a contemptuous denouncer of everything beyond the shadowy line which he recognised as dividing faith from superstition; the temporal head, in

some respects, of a band of religionists; and yet a man in full communion with the busy world, keeping the ear of society, and never out of the fullest tide of life. Such a conjunction of character had never been witnessed before in his generation, and has given occasion for estimates as different as are the points of view from which they are taken. Such as he was, all impetuous and wilful — with an arbitrary magnificence of disposition possible only to a man born to great riches, and unconscious of many of those natural restraints which teach most men the impossibility of putting their own will into full execution — Mr. Drummond had from his youth dedicated his wealth, his wit, his unparalleled activity, his social position, everything he had and was, to the service of God, according as that appeared to his vivid but peculiar apprehension. Before this time he had appeared in the track of the Haldanes at Geneva, where the dead theological lethargy of the early Reformed Church was again waking into life, and had heard the Hebrew Wolff questioning the Roman professors in the chambers of the Propaganda. Not very long before, Irving himself, a very different mould of man, had recorded in his journal a certain dissatisfaction with the perpetual external activity of the restless religious potentate. But this warm link of common belief awoke closer feelings of brotherhood. Henry Drummond, impatient, fastidious, and arbitrary, a master of contemptuous expression, acting and speaking with all the suddenness of an irresponsible agent, was as unlike a man as could possibly be supposed to the great Scotch preacher, with all the grand simplicity of his assump-

tions and tender brotherhood of his heart. But "they who loved His appearing" were united by a spell which transcended every merely human sympathy; and from this time Mr. Drummond appears to have exercised a certain degree of influence, varying, but always increasing, over the career of Irving. Their first point of actual conjunction appears to have been at this meeting of prophetical students, held at Albury. When the summer was over, with all its restraints of labour and fashion, and early winter whitened the gentle hills of Surrey, the grave little company assembled in that house, which has since given character and colour to the district round it, and become for one division of Christians a kind of visible Beth-El in the wilderness of men's houses.

"One of our number," says Irving, in the preface already quoted, "well known for his princely munificence, thought well to invite by special letter all the men, both ministers and laymen, of any orthodox communion whom he knew or could ascertain to be interested in prophetic studies; that they should assemble at his house of Albury Park, in Surrey, on the first day of Advent, that we might deliberate for a full week upon the great prophetic questions which do at present most intimately concern Christendom. In answer to this honourable summons, there assembled about twenty men of every rank, and church, and orthodox communion in these realms; and in honour of our meeting, God so ordered it that Joseph Wolff, the Jewish missionary, a son of Abraham and brother of our Lord, both according to flesh and according to faith, should also be of the number. And here, for eight days, under the roof of Henry Drummond, Esq., the present High Sheriff of the county, and under the moderation of the Rev. Hugh M'Neil, the rector of the parish of Albury, we spent six full days in close and laborious examination of the Scriptures. . . . . These things I write from recollection, not

caring to use the copious notes which I took; for it was a mutual understanding that nothing should go forth from the meeting with any stamp of authority, that the Church might not take offence, as if we had assumed to ourselves any name or right in the Church. But there was such a sanction given to these judgments by the fulness, freeness, and harmony which prevailed in the midst of partial and minor differences of opinion; by the spirit of prayer and love and zeal for God's glory and the Church's good; by the sweet temper and large charity which were spread abroad; and by the common consent that God was in a very remarkable way present with us —that I deem it my duty to make known these great results to the Christian churches which I have thus so early an opportunity of addressing.

"Having said so much, I think it to be my duty further to state the godly order and arrangement according to which the Albury conference, concerning the second Advent, was conducted; for to this, under God, I attribute in no small degree the abundance of blessings with which our souls were made glad. We set apart a day for each subject, and resolved to give no more than one day to each; and as we were but six free days assembled, having met on the Thursday and parted on the Friday of the week following, we joined the fourth and seventh subjects together, conceiving them to be closely connected with one another; and having apportioned a separate subject to each day, we proceeded to each day's work after the following method: we divided the labour of each day into three parts—a morning diet before breakfast, the second and principal diet between breakfast and dinner, and the third in the evening. The object of our morning diet, to which we assembled at eight o'clock precisely—as early as we could well see—was twofold: first, to seek the Lord for the light, wisdom, patience, devotion to His glory, communion of saints, and every other gift and grace of the Holy Spirit which was necessary and proper to the labour which was that day appointed us in God's good providence; this office was always fulfilled by a minister of the gospel. Secondly, one of the number was appointed over night, and sometimes several nights before, to open the subject of the day in an orderly and regular way, taking all his grounds of

argument, and substantiating all his conclusions out of the Holy Scriptures; and while he thus proceeded, the rest of the brethren took down the substance of what he said, and noted down the texts from which he reasoned; for we sat in the library around a large table, provided with every convenience for writing and for consulting the Holy Scriptures. When the outlines and divisions and whole groundwork of the subject were thus laid out by the brother, strengthened by our prayers, we parted without at that time declaring anything, and refreshed ourselves with breakfast, where we met the pious and honourable lady and family of our worthy host. Two full hours were allowed from the breaking up of the morning till the assembling of the midday diet, which was at eleven o'clock, in order that the brethren might each one try and prove himself before the Lord upon the great questions at issue, and that we might come together with convictions, not with uncertain persuasions, and speak from the conscience, not from present impressions. And when we assembled, and had shortly sought the Divine favour to continue with us, an office generally performed by our reverend Moderator, he proceeded in due course to ask each man for his convictions upon the subject which had been laid before us in the morning; and the rest diligently used their pen in catching the spirit of what dropped from each other's lips. No appeal was allowed but to the Scriptures, of which the originals lay before us; in the interpretation of which, if any question arose, we had the most learned Eastern scholar perhaps in the world to appeal to, and a native Hebrew—I mean Joseph Wolff. In this way did every man proceed to lay out the nature and ground of his convictions, which was done with so much liberty, and plentifulness, and mutual respect and reverence of the Holy Word, as much to delight our souls. Now this diet lasted oft four, and sometimes almost five hours,—our aim being to gather the opinions of every one before we parted; and when we tired, we refreshed ourselves with prayer, which also we regarded as our main defence against Satan. This diet also we closed with an offering of thanksgiving by any of the clerical brethren whom the Moderator might pitch upon. After dinner we again proceeded, about seven o'clock, to the work of winding up

and concluding the whole subject; but in a more easy and familiar manner, as being seated round the fire of the great library-room, yet still looking to a moderator, and with the same diligent attention to order, each seeming desirous to record everything that was said. This went on by the propounding of any question or difficulty which had occurred during the day, addressed to him who had opened the subject, or to any other able to resolve it: and so we proceeded till towards eleven o'clock, when the whole duties of the day were concluded by the singing of a hymn, and the offering up of an evening prayer. Such were the six days we spent under the holy and hospitable roof of Albury House, within the chime of the church bell, and surrounded by the most picturesque and beautiful forms of nature. But the sweetest spot was that council-room where I met the servants of the Lord—the wise virgins waiting with oil in their lamps for the bridegroom; and a sweeter still was that secret chamber where I met in the spirit my Lord and Master, whom I hope soon to meet in the flesh."

And upon this the warm emotions of the preacher burst forth into verse—verse less melodious and full of poetry than his ordinary diction, but not less the expression of those high-pitched and lyrical climaxes of feeling which naturally find utterance in rhythm and cadence. The narrative, however, which Irving gives in such detail, redeems the singular assembly out of that oblivion into which it and its proceedings have since fallen. What their deliberations were, or the results of them, is neither important to this history, nor is the present writer qualified to enter into such a subject. They who had set their chiefest hopes upon the personal appearance of our Lord, at a period which some actually fixed, and all regarded as close at hand, looked also, as a necessary preliminary of that appearance, for a personal development of evil, more remarkable and

decided than anything that had preceded it; and had so identified and concluded upon the source from which this antichrist was to come, that the ruin of the First Napoleon, and the death of his harmless and unfortunate son, had so much effect upon one, at least, of the disappointed expounders of prophecy, as, when fact could no longer be contradicted, to bring an illness upon him. This gentleman, as common rumour reports, first declared that it could not be, and then "took to his bed" in dire disappointment and distress.

A more formal account of the deliberations and conclusions of this extraordinary little assembly was published by Mr. Drummond himself, first in 1827, and afterwards when the successive meetings took place. These reports, however, being given in the form of dialogues conducted by Philalethes, Anastasius, &c., are by that masquerade so withdrawn out of all recognisable individuality, that neither the persons who took part in the conference, nor the historian of it himself,—piquant and characteristic as are his other writings,—are able to throw any perceptible token of their presence through the chaos of words and consultations. The assembly only meets again in Irving's *Preface*, and in a lighter sketch made by the missionary Wolff, who, about this time, had come over to England under the patronage of the pious autocrat of Albury. "Within the chime of the church bell," as Irving says—looking out upon the woods and lawns which inclosed that venerable remnant of ancient masonry, within the walls of which another ritual and a fuller worship were to connect and commemorate the names of Irving and Drummond, occurred this conference—the begin-

ning of the second chapter of the preacher's career—a prayerful *retreat* of piety, surrounded by all the genial observances of hospitality and human communion. It is an era of no small importance in Irving's life. Doubtless a more than usual awakening of general interest on the subject of prophecy—so often left in the mystery which can never be fully cleared up until the end come—was evidenced by a consultation so remarkable. But of the men there assembled, there was, perhaps, no such indivisible man as Irving—none so liable to be seized upon by the splendid expectation, which was henceforward, more or less, to abstract his thoughts from things more earthly; or to give himself up, with such ever-increasing devotion, as a herald of his Lord's coming. This he did henceforth, often losing, in the breathless interest of his theme, all regard to those necessary boundaries of time and space, of which he never had been too observant.

His companions are described generally as ministers and members of all the different orthodox churches—men both lay and clerical; some of them already distinguished, and some who were hereafter to become so. Mr. Hatley Frere, who, according to his own testimony, was the first to turn Irving's thoughts towards prophecy; Mr. Lewis Way, whose publications on the Second Advent Irving cites, along with his own and that of *Ben-Ezra*, as a token of the unity of three churches in the one great doctrine; the Rev. Hugh M'Neil, since so notable a member of his party in the church; along with Wolff, Drummond, and Irving, are the only members named at this early conference. But the solemnity of the meeting, the importance which all

its members felt to attach to it, and the evident curiosity it awakened, make it of itself a remarkable incident in the history of its time. That time was clearly a time of expectation. An age of great events was just over, and the public mind had not yet accustomed itself to the domestic calm. At home the internal economy of the country was swelling with great throes — agonies in which many people saw prognostics most final and fatal. Out of all the visible chaos, what a joyful, magnificent deliverance, to believe — through whatsoever anguish the troubled but short interval might pass—that the Lord was coming visibly to confound his enemies and vindicate his people! No wonder they assembled at Albury to build themselves up in that splendid hope; no wonder the empire thrilled, through some thoughtful, and many believing minds at the mere name of such an expectation;—least wonder of all, that a mind always so lofty and attuned to high emotions as that of Irving, should have given itself over to the contemplation; or should shortly begin to cast wistful looks over all the world, not only for prophecies fulfilled, but for signs approaching—watching the gleams upon the horizon which should herald the advent of the Lord.

This meeting, he tells us, delayed the completion and publication of the book which had cost him so much toil; but it was after all only the January of 1827, when that laborious performance, with the long preface, which occupies half of an octavo volume, and is one of his finest and most characteristic productions, was "offered to the Church." I can find no evidence of the amount of favour which *Ben-Ezra* and his work attained in the Church; but the transla-

tor's preface has been often quoted, and was re-printed in a separate form, along with some other of Irving's shortest and least known publications, a few years ago, by some of his admirers in Glasgow.

The year 1826 contains few letters and little domestic incident. Once only, besides that picture of the tender seclusion and generous labours of the little family at Beckenham, which I have already instanced, the clouds open round the Pentonville house. It is to show the great preacher and his wife consulting together over a calamity which has suddenly fallen upon her father's family. The minister of Kirkcaldy had been the unfortunate possessor of shares in the Fife Bank — a local joint-stock banking company — which had fallen into sudden ruin by the misconduct of some of its managers; such an occurrence as unhappily has been familiar enough to us all in more recent days. Immediately upon hearing of it, the first impulse of Irving was consolation and help. He and his Isabella took the matter into tender consideration — so much money was expected from a new publication — so much was at present in hand; and with suggestions of lofty comfort in his heart, and warm, instantaneous filial impulses of aid, he thus writes to the father in trouble:—

"21st January, 1826.

"My dear Father,—I have heard from Elizabeth of the loss in which you have been involved by wicked and worldly men, which is nothing new in the history of God's faithful servants, and ought not to trouble you. He that hath the stars in his right hand may say to you, as to the angel of the Church of Philadelphia, 'I know thy poverty (but thou art rich).' Remember we are but promised to live by the altar, and the rest is so much burdensome stewardry, to which we submit in

accommodation to the weakness of our people. . . . . Therefore, be not cast down, nor let my dear mother be cast down. Though the worst should come to the worst, what mattereth it? The kingdom of Heaven is still ours, unto which all things shall be added. And unto the new Jerusalem, the city of our habitation, the kings do bring the riches of the earth.

"But we must provide things honest in the sight of all men, that the name of Christ and his Gospel be not blasphemed, and that I may be partaker of your trial, and partaker also of your joy in rising above it, we, Isabella and I, must be allowed to contribute our part. . . . . I shall now also see to a fourth edition of the *Orations*, the third having been nearly sold off some months ago. . . . Isabella and I feel much for you and our dear mother, but we are not amazed or confounded as if some strange thing had befallen you . . ."

This letter is concluded by Mrs. Irving, with the touching argument of a woman and a mother. "If we have been able to say, 'The will of the Lord be done,' when He saw meet to take from us those who were far more dear than all worldly goods," writes little Edward's mother, her heart still bleeding from that wound, "I trust you will be enabled to take well the spoiling of your goods." It was thus they comforted each other, who had mourned together.

Early in 1827, the church in Regent Square—over the building of which Irving and his congregation had watched so lovingly, and which was to deliver them from the crowds and commotion of the little Caledonian chapel—was at last completed. At the time of its erection, it was considered the handsomest church not belonging to the Establishment (for the Presbyterians of that day, proud of their National Church, and connection with the Scotch Establishment, would have done anything sooner than allow themselves to be called Dissen-

ters) in London. One thousand sittings were taken at the time of its opening; and the excellent William Hamilton writes, in all the pious joy of a church official, about the "gratifying success" which had attended the opening services, at which Dr. Chalmers officiated. "Dr. Chalmers," writes Mr. Hamilton, sending the newspapers which contained an account of these services, along with his own joyful description, to his future wife, the sister-in-law of Irving, in Kirkcaldy manse, "was so highly pleased with his stay among us, that he spontaneously offered to pay us an annual visit. He has complied with our request to publish the sermon he preached at the opening, which contained a powerful defence of our excellent pastor, and a most eloquent eulogium on his extraordinary talents, piety, and worth, which was not a little gratifying to the congregation, but gall and wormwood to some of his enemies who were present." On the evening of the same Sunday, Dr. Gordon of Edinburgh, another old and tried friend of Irving, preached; and with the highest auguries of increase and prosperity — relieved from the inconveniences of popularity which they had felt so deeply, and able at last to appear, not in relays, but as a body together, — the congregation into which the fifty worshippers of Hatton Garden had grown entered into quiet possession of the handsome church for which they had laboured and longed. "Both Dr. Gordon and Dr. Chalmers," says the affectionate witness we have just quoted, "love our friend, and bore a noble testimony to him in public and in private wherever they went. . . . Our session now consists of seven elders and seven deacons — all, I believe, sincerely devoted to the good cause; and I am happy to say that

the most perfect harmony prevails amongst us, and indeed throughout the congregation."

Such were the domestic circumstances of the community over which Irving presided. Inspired by his fervid teaching, they believed themselves established there to carry out "a work which is likely to be the means, in God's hand, of greatly advancing the spiritual interests of our countrymen in the metropolis." By this time already many of the sermons which were afterwards found out to be heretical, had been preached and listened to with equal unconsciousness of any divergence from the orthodox faith; and the unanimity of regard and admiration with which the people clung to their leader had been as yet rather strengthened than diminished by anything that had been alleged against him. The long services in which he would not be curtailed; his perpetual determination, notwithstanding the overflowing of human kindness in his heart, to be among them the priest, the pastor, the spiritual guide, and not the companion and friend alone; the high position he assumed, and uncompromising distinctness of his attacks upon all the special forms of evil, had neither lessened the confidence nor weakened the affection of his adherents. People who steadily, and not capriciously according to the dictates of fashion, resorted to the teaching of a man who kept them nearly three hours at a stretch, Sunday after Sunday, plunged in the deepest questions of religion—sometimes maintained the strain of an argument which ascended into the secret places of the Trinity, unfathomable mystery—sometimes stirred with appeals and exhortations which excited the multitude into all but

open outcry, must indeed have been under the sway of a fascination seldom exercised, and of which few men know the secret. The thousand souls, who at its earliest commencement declared their allegiance to the preacher in his new church, had suffered this test of their sincerity; and were unanimous, harmonious, objecting neither to his long sermons, nor to his orthodoxy. But other sentiments had begun to dawn upon other men.

Dr. Chalmers, always doubtful, puzzled, but admiring, never knowing what to make of this genius, which he could not choose but acknowledge, yet which was so different from his own, and in some respects so incomprehensible to it — Dr. Chalmers writes from London to his wife, with the same half-wondering, half-comprehending regard which was visible in almost everything he said of Irving, as follows :—

"*7th May.*—Mr. Irving made his appearance and took me to his house, where I drank tea. Mr. Miller and Mr. Maclean, Scottish ministers of the London Presbytery, were there. Their talk is very much of meetings and speeches. Irving, though, is very impressive, and I do like the force and richness of his conversation. . . . . Studied about two hours, and then proceeded to take a walk with James.* We had just gone out, when we met Mr. Irving. He begged of James the privilege of two or three hours in his house, to study a sermon. I was vastly tickled with this new instance of the inroads of Scotsmen; however, James could not help himself, and was obliged to consent. We were going back to a family dinner, and I could see the alarm that was felt on the return of the

* A brother of Dr. Chalmers, noted, as all the readers of his biography will remember, for a certain kind churlishness, and special terror of the encroachments of Scotch visitors, and the universal entertainment and introductory letters required by them.

great Mr. Irving, who was very easily persuaded to join us at dinner, and the study was all put to flight. There was not a single sentence of study all the time; and notwithstanding Mrs. C——'s alarm about the shabbiness of the dinner, everything went on most delightfully. Irving intermingled the serious and the gay, took a good, hearty repast, and really charmed even James himself, so that I was very glad of the inroad that had been made upon him. *Thursday.*—Irving and I went to Bedford Square. Mr. and Mrs. Montagu took us out in their carriage to Highgate, where we spent three hours with the great Coleridge. His conversation flowed in a mighty unremitting stream. You know that Irving sits at his feet, and drinks in the inspiration of every syllable that falls from him. There is a secret and, to me, unintelligible communion of spirit between them, on the ground of a certain German mysticism, and transcendental lake poetry which I am not yet up to. *Friday.*—Mr. Irving conducted the preliminary services in the National Church. There was a prodigious want of tact in the length of his prayers—forty minutes; and altogether it was an hour and a half from the commencement of the service ere I began. . . . The dinner took place at five o'clock. Many speeches. Irving certainly errs in the outrunning of sympathy."

The length of this preliminary service seems to have troubled the great Scotch preacher mightily. He appears to have felt, with true professional disgust, the wearing out of that audience which properly belonged not to Irving, but to himself. Long after, he recurs to the same incident in a conversation with Mr. J. J. Gurney. "I undertook to open Irving's new church in London," says the discontented divine. "The congregation, in their eagerness to obtain seats, had already been assembled three hours. Irving said he would assist me by reading a chapter for me. *He chose the longest in the Bible*, and went on for an hour and a half. On another occasion he offered me the same aid, adding,

'I can be short.' I said, 'How long will it take you?' 'Only an hour and forty minutes.'"

Such an indiscretion was likely to go to the heart of the waiting preacher. Dr. Chalmers never seems to have forgotten that impatient interval, during which he had to sit by silent, and see his friend take the bloom of expectation off the audience, which had come not to hear Irving, but Chalmers. In all his after remarks, a reminiscence of his own sore experience recurs. On the following Saturday, he records that "Mr. Gordon informed me that yesternight, Mr. Irving preached on his prophecies at Hackney chapel for two hours and a half; and though very powerful, yet the people were dropping away. I really fear lest his prophecies, and the excessive length and weariness of his services, may unship him altogether, and I mean to write to him seriously on the subject."

This was the impression of a stranger, unaware of the long training by which Irving had accustomed his people to these prolonged addresses; and also of an elder, and—so far as experience went—superior in the Church, who was slow to forget that "the great Mr. Irving" had once been his own nameless assistant and subordinate. With dissatisfied and doubtful eyes, the celebrated Scotch preacher contemplated the apparently brilliant and encouraging position of his friend. The practicable, which did not trouble Irving, was strongly present in the mind of Chalmers. He, with both feet planted steadily on the common soil, cast a troubled eye upon the soaring spirit which scorned the common restraints of possibility. He shakes his head as he tells his wife of the mingled fascination and imprudence visible to himself

in this incomprehensible man. Chalmers, too, was capable of following one idea with the most absorbing enthusiasm; but his ideas were those of statesmanship, practicable and to be worked out; and with the eyes of a wisdom which, if not worldly, was at least substantial, and fully aware of all the restrictions of humanity, he looked on doubtfully at a man who calculated no possibilities, and who estimated the capacities of human nature, not from among the levels of ordinary life, but from the mountain top of his own elevated and impassioned spirit. Dr. Chalmers shook his head. What else could a man of reason and ordinary prudence do? Nothing could be certainly predicated of such a career as that which, under changed circumstances, made now a new, and to all appearance, prosperous beginning. Triumph or ruin might be beyond; scarcely the steady progress and congregational advancement, which is the only advancement in life open to the hopes of an orthodox Scotch minister. Such a progress, happy but uneventful—a yearly roll of additional members, perhaps a hundred pounds or so of additional income, a recognised place on the platform of Exeter Hall—was not a natural vaticination of the future course of Edward Irving; and over anything else, what could Chalmers—what could any other sober-minded, clerical spectator do otherwise than shake his head? Something was like to come of it too far out of the ordinary course to yield ordinary comfort or happiness; and I don't doubt that Chalmers returned to Scotland alarmed and uneasy, comprehending as little what would be the end, as he entered into the thoughts and emotions which were bringing that end about.

And, indeed, it was a crisis of no small importance. Up to this time, the preacher and his congregation had been in exceptional circumstances. They had never been able to make experiment of that calm congregational existence. Crowded out of the little Caledonian chapel for years, their hopes had gone forward to that new church which was to be a kind of national centre in the noisy capital, and the completion of which was to open the way to a great and extended mission. It was only natural that all the projects and hopes both of leader and people should fix upon that place as the scene of the result and issue to their great labours. Doubtless they did so unawares. For years the preacher had been used to see round him an unusual exceptional crowd, drawn out of all regions, necessarily unsteady and fluctuating—a crowd which he could charm and thrill and overawe for the moment, but out of which few results could be visible. Now was the time to test what had been done in that flattering overflow of popular admiration. If, as Carlyle says, "hopes of a new moral reformation" had fired the preacher's heart —if, with the flattered expectation of a popular idol he was watching to see the "sons of Mammon, and high sons of Belial and Beelzebub become sons of God, and the gumflowers of Almack's to be made living roses in a new Eden"—now was the time to test that dream. The tiny chapel where celebrities could not be overlooked, and where the crowd never could lessen — first chapter and preparatory stage of the history—was now left in the quiet of the past; and with full space to collect and receive all who sought him, and the highest expectations and hopes of now seeing the fruits of his

labour, Irving entered that new temple, whence a double blessing was to descend upon his people's prayers. If fashion had crazed him with her momentary adulation, here was the critical point at which fashion and he parted; the beginning of a disenchantment which, next to personal betrayal, is perhaps the hardest experience in the world.

This has been accepted by many — and asserted by one who knew him thoroughly, and from whose judgment I know not how to presume to differ—as the secret cause of all the darker shadows and perplexing singularities of his later life. I am as little able to cope with Mr. Carlyle in philosophic insight as I am in personal knowledge; I can only take my appeal to Irving himself in the singular journal which has already been given. If that record shows any trace of a man whose heart has been caught in the meshes of the social enchantress; if he looks to have Circe's cup in his hand as he goes pondering through those streets of Bloomsbury and Pentonville, or with anxious care and delicacy visits the doubtful believer in Fleet Market, and comforts the sorrowful souls who seek his kindness in the nameless lanes of the city, I am willing to allow that this was the influence that set his mind astray. But if the readers of this history are as unable as myself to perceive any trace of that intoxication — an intoxication too well known in all its symptoms, and too often seen to be recognised with difficulty — another clue may be reasonably required for this mystery. I can find no evidence whatever, except in what he himself says in the dedication of his Sermons to Mr. Basil Montagu, of even a tendency on Irving's part to be

carried away by that brilliant social stream. He speaks of himself there as "being tempted to go forth, in the simplicity of my heart, into those high and noble circles of society which were then open to me, and which must either have engulfed me by their enormous attractions, or else repelled my simple affections, shattered and befooled, to become the mockery and contempt of every envious and disappointed railer." But that was at the earliest period of his London experience. The master of the Pentonville household, with all its quaint and simple economics, with its domestic services, frequented not by the great, and its stream of homely guests—the faithful priest, exercising all the human courtesies and Christian tendernesses of his nature to win a sullen, London errand-boy, or convince a sceptic of the humblest ranks—who is not to be moved by the representations even of his anxious elders to shorten his services by half-an-hour, or adapt himself to the necessities of his popularity,—is, on his own evidence, the most unlike a man carried away and crazed by the worship of Fashion that can be conceived. If he had been such a man, here was the sickening moment when the syren visibly went her way. The crowd that fluctuated in the tiny aisles of the Caledonian chapel, and presented the preacher with a wonderful, suggestive, moving panorama of the great world without, which he addressed through these thronged and ever-changing faces, settled into steady identity in Regent Square. The throng ceased in that spacious interior. Those mists of infinitude cleared off from the permanent horizon—"Fashion went her idle way," Mr. Carlyle says: indisputably the preacher must have

learned that he was no longer addressing the world, the nation, the great capital of the world, but a certain clearly definable number of its population—a congregation, in short, and not an age.

This great change happened to Irving at the moment when he had apparently arrived at the beginning of his harvest-time. The office-bearers of his church found the fruit they sought in the roll of seat-holders and communicants, the visible increase which had promoted them from the Caledonian chapel to the National Scotch church. But to the preacher the effect must have been wonderfully different—as different as reality always is from expectation. At the end of that uncertain, brilliant probation, which seemed to promise results the most glorious, he woke and found himself at the head of a large congregation. It was all his friends could have wished for him—the highest amount of external success which his Church acknowledged. But it was an indifferent climax to the lofty hopes of the great evangelist. Yet this great shock and crisis seems to have been encountered and got through unconsciously, with no such effects as might have been anticipated. There is, indeed, no evidence that Irving was himself aware when he passed out of that wide horizon of hope and possibility, into the distinct field laid out for him under the smoky canopy of London sky. Yet here is the evident point when that transition happened. The wide popular current ebbed away from the contracted ways of Hatton Garden, and subsided into a recognisable congregation in Regent Square. "The church was always well filled, but no longer crowded," says the calm official retrospect of the

present community belonging to that church. Fashion then and there took her departure; but so far from plunging into wild attempts to re-attract her fickle devotion, the preacher seems to have gone on unconscious, without even being aware of what had happened to him. Years intervened, and the fervent beginnings of thought—then only appearing in a firmament where the hidden lights came out one by one, all unforeseen by the eager gazer till they startled him with sudden illuminations—came to developments never unaccordant with the nature that produced them, though mysterious and often sad enough to the calm looker-on, before the world which had subsided out of its frenzy of admiration was tempted to return into a frenzy of curiosity and wonder. In the meantime, Irving's sober-minded Scottish friends left him in his new beginning with alarms and uneasy forebodings, not that he would peril his understanding in attempts to retain his popularity, but that the unmanageable sublimation and prophet-spirit of the man, inaccessible as they felt it to all such motives, would ruin his popularity altogether.

Some years before two silver salvers had been presented to Irving by the grateful office-bearers of the Scotch church in Liverpool. When the National Scotch church was opened, he presented them, with an impulse of natural munificence, for the service of the house of God. Everybody at all acquainted with the usages of the Church of Scotland must be aware of the collection made weekly at the doors of every place of worship—a collection entirely voluntary, yet so thorough "an institution," that, to an old-fashioned Scotsman, the fact of passing "the plate" without

depositing a coin in it, would be something like a petty crime. The fund thus collected is entitled the Session Fund, and is in parish churches appropriated to the relief of the poor; and it was from this fund alone that Chalmers, in the day of his reign in Glasgow, provided for the poor of his parish, and abolished pauperism in St. John's. Irving designed his silver salvers for the reception of this weekly bounty, and presented them to the church on the day of its opening, engraven with the following inscription:—

"These two plates I send to the National Scotch church, London, on this the 11th of May, 1827, the day of its opening, that they may stand on each side of the door to receive the offerings for the Poor, and all other gifts of the congregation of the LORD in all time coming while He permits. And if at any time, which God forbid, the fountain of the people's charity should be dried up, and the Poor of the Lord's house be in want of bread, or His house itself under any restraint of debt, I appoint that they shall be melted into shillings and sixpences, for the relief of the same, so far as they will go.

"EDWARD IRVING, A.M., V.D.M.
"Minister of the National Scotch Church, London."

Irving's purpose, I am sorry to say, was not carried out. The elders, more prudent and less splendid than he, imagined or discovered that the show of the silver at the door of the church, even though watched over by two of their members, would be too great a temptation to the clever thieves about. Irving's salvers were altogether withdrawn from the office of receiving the pennies and sixpences of the congregation, and were placed, where they still remain, among the communion plate of the church in Regent Square.

The only public appearance which he is recorded to have made at this period was at one of the field days of the long and warm intestine war which at that time was raging in the Bible Society. The conduct of that Society generally had not been agreeable to Irving. Going to the meetings of its London Committee as to the assembling of a body of men engaged in the service of religion, he had been at once chilled and startled by the entirely secular nature of their proceedings. When he remonstrated, he was answered that they were not missionaries, but booksellers; and this was doubtless one of the points at which the vulgar *business*, and bustling secularity of the religious world disgusted a man who had nothing whatever to do with a mere community of booksellers, nor could understand why the Church's interest should be specially claimed for such. His indignation and protest on this point, however, were private; the controversy was a public one, and had now lasted for many years. The question was whether or not the Apocrypha should be issued along with the canonical Scriptures as a part of the Bible, which the Society professed themselves commissioned to spread throughout the world. The warmest interest had been excited in religious circles generally, and especially in Scotland, by this dispute. North of the Tweed the Apocrypha has always been held in particular abhorrence, and the idea of supporting, by their labours and subscriptions, a Society which sent forth this spurious revelation along with the canon of Scripture, roused the pugnacious kingdom into a blaze of displeasure and resistance. The Society at its headquarters stood out stoutly; why, it seems impossible

to find out, unless by an instinct of self-assertion and controversy; and it was not until the whole community was in commotion, and a serious secession threatened, that the London Committee came to its senses. Just at the moment when it was about do so, at the Anniversary Meeting held in May 1827, Irving made his appearance in the place of meeting. His entrance created a commotion which interrupted the business—the general public, apparently, having by this time come to understand that this man could not be regarded with calm impartiality, but must either be loved or hated. The tumult raised on his appearance naturally aroused the orator to assert himself, and, independently of the timid authority of the chair, to make himself heard. It is difficult, in the vague account given, to find out what "motion" it was that Irving supported, or what was accomplished by the forgotten assembly, whose cheers and hisses would have long ago passed into oblivion, but for the presence of that unusual champion. With a straightforward manfulness and simplicity, which look quaint and out of place upon such a platform, and which must have been wonderfully confusing to the minds of the Society, he advises them to "acknowledge that they are exceedingly sorry." And when this suggestion is received with mingled hisses and applause, he indignantly asks, "Is there any member of the Church of England — is there any consistent Protestant Dissenter—who would think it at all degrading to him to acknowledge himself in error when he felt he was so, and when so doing would heal the wounds which had been inflicted thereby, and so unite a whole Christian Church to the Society? Would

it be at all degrading to the Committee to say that it was sorry that that which is not the Word of God had been (say unwittingly, or unwarily, I mind not the word) mixed up and circulated with the Book of God? Let them, I say, record that which they have individually expressed by word of mouth — that that which is not the Bread of Life has been sent out to the world as the Bread of Life, and that they are sorry!" The answer which the Bible Society or its Committee gave to this appeal is not recorded. But Irving triumphantly overcame the opposition against his own appearance, and retired from the meeting, which he did immediately after his speech, amid universal applause.

In the meantime, his private family story went on, amid the clouds which, having once descended, so often continue to overshadow the early history of a household. In the same spring, another infant, a short-lived little Mary, came to a house saddened by the long and serious illness of the mother. In the depression occasioned by this interruption of domestic comfort, Irving writes, in a mood certainly not habitual, but from which such a temperament as his can never be severed:

"For myself, I feel the burden of sin so heavily, and the unprofitableness of this vexed life, that I long to be delivered from it, and would gladly depart when the Lord may please: yet, while He pleaseth, I am glad to remain for His Church's sake. What I feel for myself, I feel for my dear wife, whom I love as myself. And at present my rejoicing is, that she is able to praise Him in the furnace of trial and the fire of affliction."

In another and brighter mood, however, he writes the following letter, full of projects, to Dr. Martin:—

"8th June, 1827.

"My dear Father,—We have all great reason of thankfulness to the Giver of all gifts, and the Fountain of all strength, for the recovery of Isabella and the children, whose health is now so far re-established, as that Dr. Darling recommends her going to the country in a few days. I am now fairly entered upon my duties in the new church, and, by the grace of God, have begun with a more severe self-devotion to secret study and meditation. In the morning I propose to expound the whole Epistle to the Ephesians, in order to clear out anew some of the wells of salvation which have been choked up, at least in these parts, and to see if there be not even deeper springs than the Reformers reached. In the evening I am to discourse upon the sixth vial, which I propose as a sequel to my discourses upon *Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed*, and which I intend to print in the fall of the year. I think that, by God's blessing, I can throw a new and steady light upon the present face of Christendom and the world. Besides this, I have a little tribute of friendship to pay to Basil Montagu . . . and an aphoristic history of the Church of Scotland, from the primitive times to this time, for an introduction to a work containing the republication of our authorised books at the Reformation. It is for man to design, but God to permit and to enable; yet, if He spare me, I hope to do His Church some service. I ask your prayers, and entreat solicitously for them; although I know that we must have the spirit of prayer in ourselves and for ourselves. Farewell; may the Lord make the going down of your age more brilliant than the beginning of it, and enrich you all with His divine grace, and enlighten you with His countenance. Amen.

"Your affectionate son,

"Edward Irving."

The little Mary died in December of the same year. Though the second blow does not seem to have struck like the first, it deepened the channel of those personal tears first wrung from Irving's eyes by the death of his little Edward; and quickened into pathetic adoration his thankfulness for the almost revelation, as he

believed it, which had thrown light upon that doctrine of Baptism, henceforth to be held as one of the brightest, comforting inspirations of his life. The volume of *Lectures on Baptism*, in which he set before the Church the views which had been so consolatory to his own heart, was prefaced by the following touching dedication:

"To Isabella Irving, my wife, and the mother of my two departed children.

"My honoured and beloved Wife,—I believe in my heart that the doctrine of the holy Sacraments, which is contained in these two little volumes, was made known to my mind, first of all, for the purpose of preparing us for the loss of our eldest boy; because on that very week you went with him to Scotland, whence he never returned, my mind was directed to meditate and preach these discourses upon the standing of the baptized in the Church, which form the sixth and seventh of the Homilies on Baptism. I believe it also, because, long before our little Edward was stricken by the hand of God in Scotland, I was led to open these views to you in letters, which, by God's grace, were made efficacious to convince your mind. I believe it, furthermore, because the thought contained in these homilies remained in my mind like an unsprung seed, until it was watered by the common tears we shed over our dying Mary. From that time forth I felt that the truth concerning baptism, which had been revealed for our special consolation, was not for that end given, nor for that end to be retained; and therefore I resolved, at every risk, to open to all the fathers and mothers of the Christian Church the thoughts which had ministered to us so much consolation.

"I desire most gratefully to acknowledge my obligations to the fathers of the Scottish Church, whose Confession of Faith concerning the Sacraments, and especially the sentence which I have placed as the motto * of this book, were, under

* The motto of the book is as follows:—"We utterly condemn the vanity of those who affirm sacraments to be nothing but naked and bare signs."—*Confession of Scotch Reformers.*

God, made instrumental in opening to me the whole truth of Holy Scripture concerning Baptism and the Lord's Supper; of which having been convinced, by God's blessing upon these words of my fathers in the Church, upon consulting the venerable companion of my early studies, Richard Hooker, I found such a masterly treatise upon the whole subject of the Sacraments, that I scrupled not to rank as one of his disciples, and to prefer his exposition infinitely to my own: yet to both to prefer that sentence of our own Confession which I have placed as the motto of my book. For this reason it is that I have reprinted those parts of Hooker's treatise which concern the doctrine of the Sacraments.

"And now, my dear wife, as we have been sorely tried of the Lord, by the removal of two such sweet children, let us be full of prayers and fellow-feeling for those who are in like manner tried; and, above all, be diligent in waiting upon those children of Christian Baptism, whom Christ hath committed to my charge as a bishop and shepherd of His flock; unto all whom, even as many as by my hands have been admitted into His Church, I do now bestow my fatherly benediction in the Lord. May the Lord make you the mother of many children to glorify His name for ever and ever! This is the prayer of your loving husband,

"EDWARD IRVING."

The volumes thus inscribed were not published till 1828; but they belong to this period of much quiet, but many emotions, which lay between the death of his two children. He laboured much, and pondered more, during these two years. They were the seed-time of a great and melancholy harvest; and, containing, as they did, the first germs of those convictions which he afterwards carried so far, and the adjuncts of which carried him still farther, they are full of interest in the history of his life. The Albury conference, which drew him into the close and exciting intercourse of a brotherhood engrossed with hopes and expectations unshared by the

common world, and the opening of his church, which brought him suddenly out of the brilliant, indefinite world of possibility into a certain position, restricted by visible limits of the real, were, perhaps, equally operative in preparing his mind for all that dawned upon it. What that was, and how it began to develop, may be better treated in another chapter.

One of the most noble pieces of oratory which Irving ever produced,—the *Ordination Charge*, which reads like an ode of the most thrilling and splendid music,—was delivered in this spring at the ordination of the Rev. Hugh Maclean to the charge of the Scots church, London Wall. It is a kind of satisfaction to know that the man so magnificently addressed—in a strain to which perhaps no Scotch minister, and few priests of any description, have ever been called to listen—had soul enough to follow the leader, who charged him to his duty as one hero might another, out into the conflicts and troubles of his after-life. Such an appeal must have thrilled to the heart of any man capable of being moved to high emotions. I am not aware that any similar ode has ever embellished the ordination service of any other church than that which Irving here describes as "the most severe and uncompromising" of all Christian churches. It is an unrivalled outburst, full of all the lyric varieties and harmonies of a great poem, and must have fallen with startling effect upon the commonplace ears of a quiet company of ministers, no man among whom, except the speaker, had ever distinguished himself, or had a chance of distinguishing himself. Such an address might have given a climax to the vocation of a heaven-born preacher;

but it is only the genius capable of being roused to the utmost by such an appeal that is ever able to offer it; and the heroic strain called forth no answering wonder. But the young preacher to whom it was addressed threw his humble fortunes, in after days, into the same lot as that of his instructor in the office of the ministry; and one feels a certain comfort in knowing that the disciple was faithful to the master who had connected his unknown name with an address which inferred such noble qualities in him who could receive it.

Later in the year, Irving made a short visit to Leicester, to see his friend Mr. Vaughan, with whom, and with "some other ministers of the Church of England there," we hear that "he had some delightful intercourse." "He was expressing to me yesterday," writes William Hamilton, "how much he had been gratified by the harmony which prevailed, and the exact coincidence of their views on almost all the important points which they discussed." The same writer goes on to tell how Irving had visited with him the families under his own charge as an elder, and of "the cordial reception they everywhere met with." "Mr. Irving is very happy and successful on these occasions," writes his admiring friend, "and it is very delightful to see such harmony and good feeling amongst the members." Thus, undeterred by the many absorbing subjects of thought which were rising to his mind — by the engrossing prophetical studies which Dr. Chalmers feared would "unship him altogether" — or even by the impatience and almost disgust which often assailed his own spirit in sight of the indifferent and unimpressible world, he pursued all the varieties of his immediate duty,

carrying through it all a certain elevation and lofty tone which never interfered with the human loving-kindness in which all his brethren had a share. Notwithstanding his unsparing condemnation of evil and worldliness, Irving had so much of the "celestial light" in his eyes, that he unconsciously assigned to everybody he addressed a standing-ground in some degree equal to his own. The "vision splendid" attended him not only through his morning course, but throughout all his career. The light around him never faded into the light of common day. Unawares he addressed the ordinary individuals about him as if they, too, were heroes and princes;—charged the astounded yet loyal-hearted preacher, who could but preach, and visit, and do the other quiet duties of an ordinary minister, to be at once an apostle, a gentleman, and a scholar;—made poor, astonished women, in tiny London apartments, feel themselves ladies in the light of his courtesy;—and unconsciously elevated every man he talked with into the ideal man he ought to have been. This *glamour* in his eyes had other effects, melancholy enough to contemplate; but even though it procured him trouble and suffering, I cannot find it in my heart to grudge Irving a gift so noble. The harm that comes by such means is neutralised by a power of conferring dignity and happiness possessed by very few in the common world.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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